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ECONOMIC COUNCIL REVIEW OF BOOKS

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, Editor

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TIME TO INQUIRE: *by Samuel Crowther*

Indeed it is time to inquire. America is being herded into a system of totalitarian collectivism as fast as a highly-organized fanatical minority can drive it. The government is raking in American liberties with both hands and confiscating them to its own uses. The old American idea was that the government existed for the people, and the less there was of it the better off the people were. Now the idea is that the people exist for the government, and the more there is of it the better off the government is.

That is what democracy in America has come to at the present time. Democracy used to mean a state of things where the citizen had the right to enjoy life, liberty, property and the pursuit of happiness, all with an irreducible minimum of interference. Today democracy means a state of things where the citizen has a vote—that is, he has the right to choose which of two rival gangs shall rob, dragoon and pester him. That is the only right he has, and even that has just about reached the point where he will have the choice of voting *Ja*—or else. In short, the modern ideal of American democracy is that the citizen shall have no rights which any wretched little nonentity in a swivel-chair at Washington is bound to respect.

To say that all this is only a matter of "war economy" is nonsense. Long before war was even thought of the government had its lustful eye on every potato-patch, soda-fountain and peanut-stand in the country. Does anybody remember when the pigs were plowed under? Or when it was made a crime to possess gold? Or when you didn't dare plant the crop you wanted until you had seen Mr. Wallace about it? Washington just now is full of plans for a "post-war

economy." Has anybody noticed anything in any of them about demobilizing the bureaucracy? Or about dissolving the government's strangle-hold on production? Or about restoring to the citizen the liberties guaranteed him by the Bill of Rights?

Of course, as Lincoln said, for those who like that sort of thing it is probably about the sort of thing they like. If this modern idea of democracy suits Americans, there is nothing more to be said. It would not be good enough for John Adams, Jefferson or Madison or even Lincoln himself, for according to the Gettysburg speech Old Abe believed that government is "for the people," and not the other way around. But these men died long ago, and if this new type of democracy is what the American people of today are really wanting, they are within their rights and they ought to get it—get it good and hard.

Nevertheless it is only fair that they should have a chance to know in detail just what it is that they are wanting, and here is where Mr. Crowther's book comes in. Mr. Crowther is one of the best-informed men in the world of affairs, and he also has something which precious few writers now before the public show any signs of having. He has common sense. Reading his book is a liberal education in the use of good strong sterling horse-sense. Of course, again if Americans prefer books written by wishful thinkers, maudlin thinkers or people who can't think at all, they are within their rights, and they may take this as fair warning to let Mr. Crowther's book alone. They will have no trouble about getting what they want, for tons of such rubbish are dumped off the country's presses every twenty-four hours.

Mr. Crowther's first chapter is a portrayal of

America's economy, precisely as it is today. It shows just what an unbridled run of vicious political theory backed by a mass of ignorant and bumptious welfare-workerism has brought us to. Free enterprise and free initiative no longer exist. The enormous producing class is being ground to powder between the millstones of a parasitic bureaucracy above, and a boss-ridden proletariat beneath. The American citizen is no longer an individual. He is merely a number, marching in a convict's lock-step under a warden's orders. He is a thing of no spiritual account. "The dignity of man," says Mr. Crowther, "—that dignity for which Christ died on the cross, and which was our ideal—has been cast away as though it were nothing."

The rest of the book, down to its powerful summing-up in the last two chapters, is devoted to an orderly, comprehensive thoroughly-documented and irrefutable exposition of how we got that way. Nothing could be better or clearer. Mr. Crowther describes the delusions of grandeur which beset the country after the last war, and which resulted in the incredible economic antics of the 'twenties and the autocracy of the 'thirties. His fourth chapter on "The Legend of the 'Twenties" deserves most careful study for the sake of seeing exactly what happened and did not happen during that period, and what the consequences were.

Our great fundamental delusion was that money can be substituted for goods. It was forgetfulness of the fact that money is worth only what it will buy, and if it will not buy anything it is not worth anything. This delusion still persists. Only, whereas up to the crash of 1929 it was fostered by banker-speculators and promoters, it has since

then been taken up and fostered by the government on a scale which makes 1929 seem trivial. 1929 was bad enough, but it was brought about by individuals within the framework of our system, and so the delusion carried its own cure. But now, as Mr. Crowther says, since the delusion is fostered by government on such a colossal scale, "the cure is something which any one who cares for liberty and human welfare must find terrible to contemplate."

It is refreshing to meet once more in print a vindication of the principles of sound economics, now so long lost sight of or made a laughing-stock for bureaucratic nitwits to smirk at. Goods and services can be paid for only in goods and services. Money is not wealth. The State can produce money, but it cannot produce wealth. When money is divorced from its function as a medium of exchange and made an instrument of State policy, the State's economy goes to ruin. There is no dodging such principles as these. Politicians and jack-leg economists have long tried every conceivable way to get around them, climb over them or tunnel under them, but none has ever succeeded or ever will.

Mr. Crowther is not writing for theorists or planners or people with axes to grind. He writes for the multitude of men who want nothing but to be getting on with their work and who wonder what is stopping them, and why. If an American of average intelligence and common sense will read pages 310-311 of this book, I guarantee that he will read the rest of it, and it is a safe bet that he will read it prayerfully.

A. J. N.

The John Day Company, \$2.75.

ONE WORLD: *by Wendell L. Willkie*

I picked up Mr. Willkie's book with the strongest feelings of distrust and dislike. When Mr. Willkie consented to take the Republican nomination in 1940 on the ridiculous terms offered by the party's platform, I put him down as just one more jobseeker, venal as the rest of them and stupider than most. Since then I have not read a line of Mr. Willkie's published utterances.

So I opened this book with no expectation of finding anything in it that a decent man could say a good word for. On the contrary, I found a great deal that is sound, courageous, sensible and admirable. I do not wonder at the sale the book has had; it ought to have more. I may as well say at the outset that it is perfectly competent for any one to believe that Mr. Willkie sees the way the wind is blowing and has put out this book as a political trial-balloon, with his mind on a renomination next year. But with all my prejudice against Mr. Willkie, I find it hard to believe that. If I am any judge of such matters, the book has the literary marks of an honest production, and I think it is one. A year's time will tell, however, whether I am right about this or not, and for the moment I prefer to believe I am.

This does not mean that the book is to be swallowed whole. It carries a tremendous load of wishful thinking, and the odd thing is that Mr. Willkie often seems aware that it does. The book has some errors of fact, and Mr. Willkie uses terms and phrases which he does not quite understand. Also he has evidently often been led very far up the garden by some of his informants. But if the reader has gone through Mr. Crowther's book (and the two should be read together in this order, Mr. Crowther's first, and then Mr. Willkie's) he will have no trouble about forming a correct judgment on everything Mr. Willkie says.

Mr. Willkie's main point is the familiar one of specifications for some sort of post-war world order that has some chance of permanence. His suggestions are fair, sensible and valuable, especially those he makes about the spirit which should pervade the job. He is very severe on British and American official failure to show anything like this spirit. His comment on the fraudulent Atlantic Charter; on the rascally dealings with Darlan and the appointment of Peyrouton; on the ominous silence of Comrade Joe concerning his intentions in Poland and eastwardly; on signifi-

cant matters like these his comment is dignified, devastating and admirable. So are his observations and warnings about American support of British diplomatic hanky-panky in the Middle East and other knaveries of like nature.

I must call attention to one or two examples of Mr. Willkie's incredible naivete, in full belief that they are perfectly honest. He says, "if we permit ourselves to become involved in the machinations of Old World intrigue, . . . we will find ourselves amateurs indeed." But we are involved already. On his own evidence the African adventure involved us up to the neck. Again, he says that literally everywhere he went he found American soldiers, and that the people liked them. Robespierre was against sending out what he called "armed missionaries" to spread the gospel of liberty, equality and fraternity, because people would notice they were armed and would take them for enemies. Now what, for instance, can the peoples of the Middle East actually think of our fine hifalutin American pretensions when they see our armed missionaries stiffening the British grasp on all the strategic points in their countries? Mr. Willkie lets it out that Mr. Roosevelt asked him not to go to India—and no wonder.

Mr. Willkie is once more curiously naive in supposing that public opinion can affect the peace terms. The same kind of men who made the war will make the peace, and that means Versailles and the secret treaties over again. The real peacemakers will meet in all the secrecy and irresponsibility of professional criminals, and confront public opinion with an established fact. Mr. Willkie is right in saying that absolute governments keep close tabs on public opinion, but they do it for a much more sinister purpose than Mr. Willkie imagines. If American public opinion were united and rampant from Maine to California, it would have no more effect on shaping the peace terms than it would have had on our entering the war.

But in his chapter on "Our Imperialism at Home" Mr. Willkie opens a subject on which public opinion can focus effectively—the subject of our racial and cultural minorities. It is a pity that his exuberance has led him into egregious overstatement of several points, for the matter is extremely difficult and precarious, requiring to be approached with scrupulous realism. Nothing is gained by congratulating ourselves on having obtained "the most reasonable expression of free-

dom that has yet existed in history," or by spates of flatulence about the binding power of "confidence in our democratic institutions." All this sort of windiness may do very well as Fourth of July oratory, but it is quite out of place in dealing with a matter of immediate and terrible urgency.

Nevertheless on the main issue Mr. Willkie is superbly sound. The merit of this chapter is its showing that it is more in our interest to maintain the rights of minorities than it is in theirs. Guarding the liberty of minorities, as he says, is a policy of enlightened common sense, for in impairing it we open the way for impairment of our own. Minorities are rich assets. They are "the constant spring of new ideas, stimulating new thought and new action, the constant source of new vigor." Again, Mr. Willkie's logic is remorseless when he says that "if we want to talk about freedom, we must mean freedom for others as well as ourselves, and we must mean freedom for everyone inside our frontiers as well as outside." Straight to the point also is his reminder that "our very proclamations of what we are fighting for have rendered our own inequities self-evident."

The truth is that Mr. Willkie's ideas, excellent as they may be, are about ten thousand years ahead of human society's present development. Meanwhile the sound Americanism he discloses in

his book is too good to waste. I suggest he throw off the One World obsession, and apply his Americanism to America where it will really count. Let the heathen rage—he can find plenty to do at home. He says he is "completely opposed to any system that leads to absolutism,"—well, he will find absolutism under a new label at its worst in his own country. He is down on censorship and believes that "every one of us has the obligation to speak out, to exchange ideas freely and frankly,"—well, if he wants to learn something about the fine points of censorship, the best place on earth to do it is right here. He loathes the stink of political sneakery and crookery,—well, he is not the only one. There are still a few old-line Americans who take their political philosophy straight from John Adams, and are mighty tired of going around all the time trying to keep on the windward side of Mrs. Jellyby's kitchen-midden and its vermin.

It seems possible that Mr. Willkie, the free-lance, may be an entirely different breed of cat, from Mr. Willkie, the candidate. If he is, and if he sticks to free-lancing and does his free-lancing at home, he won't lack support.

A. J. N.

Simon and Schuster, \$2 cloth-bound, \$1 paper-bound.

Books Received to be Considered Later

THE FREEDOM TO BE FREE, by James Marshall (John Day. \$2.50).

NOW IS THE MOMENT, by Harold Rugg (Duell, Sloan & Pearce. \$2.50).

AMERICA, RUSSIA AND THE AMERICAN COMMUNIST PARTY, by John Childs and Others (John Day. \$1.25).

THE ENGLISH PEOPLE—IMPRESSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS, by D. W. Brogan (Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.00).

EDUCATION FOR A WORLD ADRIFT, by Sir Richard Livingston (Macmillan Company. \$1.25).

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A CURMUDGEON, by Harold L. Ickes (Reynal & Hitchcock. \$3.00).

GIDEON PLANISH, by Sinclair Lewis (Random House. \$2.50).

THE GOD OF THE MACHINE, by Isabel Paterson (Putnam. \$2.75).

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Vol. I, No. 2

June 15, 1943

THE GOD OF THE MACHINE. *By Isabel Paterson.*

It is hard for me to keep my enthusiasm for this book from running away with my judgment. Mrs. Paterson has presented the ablest, most acute and closely-reasoned piece of political writing that has been produced in this country in my time. It is a curious fact that with all our loose talk about "rugged individualism" we have never produced anything like a reasoned defense of it; and the consequence is that two generations of Americans have grown up with the idea that individualism is nothing but a polite name for unlimited gain-grabbing. They are unaware that individualism not only has a philosophy, but also has one which is so sound and solid that anybody who sets out to refute it has his hands full. Not until now have we had a respectable intellectual defense of the doctrine that only free men working in a free economy—free from governmental interference, restraint, prescription, coercion—can build a political structure which has any chance of stability. Freedom is the basic thing, the primary essential condition. It is also one and indivisible. It is nothing to be dealt out in sections after the fashion of the Atlantic Charter. There is no such thing as "four freedoms" or forty or any other number. Freedom has no plural. Freedom either is or it isn't.

So in this book we really have something. After a long dismal debauch on all sorts of hare-brained quackery and demagoguery, the country can now sober up on a work which gets down to brass tacks. Readers should be cautioned at the outset, however, that this restorative must be taken by sips, not by gulps, and between the sips there must be a good long time devoted to digestive

thought. I suggest keeping a lead pencil handy, and marking the passages that strike you on a first reading; then read the book again, and mark some more that you have missed; then read it a third time as carefully as if you had never seen it before. One must be a better reader than most of us are to do this book justice under anything short of three readings, for every sentence counts.

The problem of constructing a stable political system, as Mrs. Paterson sees it, is an engineering problem. The approach to it must be governed by the principles of engineering. Mrs. Paterson writes in the idiom and glossary of the engineer. As far as I know, she is the first to make this particular approach and follow through on it to its logical end. When one sees what she does with it, one wonders why it has not been done before, especially since this way of approach is the natural channel of the "machine age" in which we have lived so long, and the idiom she employs is the chosen idiom of the time.

The book is planted on the basis of history, and its interpretations of history are admirable. Nothing could be better than its analysis of Greek, Roman, Phoenician and British civil polity, and its exhibit of the effects due to relative freedom of the individual acting in a relatively free economy. Why Rome beat Carthage, for example, has always been a mystery. On a superficial view one would say there was no reason why it should, and every reason why it should not. So likewise one would say that Britain should never have beaten Spain. A good gambler would have bet a hundred to one the other way. The reasons for

Britain's victory, which Mrs. Paterson gives in simple engineering terms, are the only ones so far put forward that are even plausible; and as far as I can see they account for everything.

But any *précis* of Mrs. Paterson's work that could be at all satisfactory would be as long as the book itself. I have only space to say that the greatest practical benefit which the reader may expect to get will be from the many instances where the book gives the support of solid reason to truths which he has already felt by instinct. Mr. Jefferson once remarked how true men's instincts are, and how feeble their interpretations of them are. If I had to describe Mrs. Paterson's book in one sentence, I would say that it is a superbly accurate and reliable interpreter of instinct.

For example, we all know by instinct that we have, as individuals, certain natural and inalienable rights, such as the right to life, liberty, property and the pursuit of happiness. Instinct tells us that we were born with those rights, they are part of our being. The State does not give them to us. We were "endowed by our Creator" with them, as the Declaration of Independence says. Very few of us can give a rational account of that instinct; but nevertheless, there it is. Again, we "feel it in our bones" that Fascism and the New Deal, or Communism and Naziism, are merely two sides of the same bogus half dollar, since they both rest on the same assumption that the individual has no rights which the State is bound to respect. Few of us can say exactly why we feel that way, but we do. Again, we know instinct-

ively that a "planned economy" won't work, even though we can't say exactly why. Again, we feel that majority-rule, "the greatest good to the greatest number," State capitalism, and bureaucratic nostrums like "social security," are all moonshine, but we can't show cause. In respect of a whole host of such matters, Mrs. Paterson does us the inestimable service of showing that our instincts are sound and trustworthy, that they have reason on their side, that we can rely on them implicitly, and that we are safe in letting them control our action.

I have two complaints, however, against the publishers of this book. First, there is not one word in the book which is even remotely answerable to the book's title. Such a fanciful catchpenny title might do passably well for a detective story, but for a substantial work like this it is damaging and disgraceful. Second, why does a great house like Putnam's not impress upon its copyreaders the one simple rule that punctuation exists to make reading easier? Two ambiguous sentences in this book I had to read five times before I could guess out their probable meaning. In each case one semicolon and one comma would have made the meaning clear at a glance. Reading is hard enough work at best without complicating it by lugging in an arbitrary fad of minimum-punctuation or no-punctuation, and reputable publishers ought to be above treating their clients in that cavalier fashion.

New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 292 pp. \$2.75.

GIDEON PLANISH.

By Sinclair Lewis.

Whatever may be thought of Mr. Lewis's quality as a novelist, there can be no possible question of his being a first-class pamphleteer. In ardor, energy and wanton sportiveness he is the Camille Desmoulins of America. In this book he goes out against one of the most pernicious evils of the time. When the movement towards collectivism got under way, some fifty years ago, "society," instead of the individual, became the great criterion. One must be "socially-minded." The good of society, "the greatest good of the greatest number," was the thing for everybody to aim at. This tendency promptly brought out a large number of energumens, professional doers-of-good, welfare-workers, each one surrounded by

a cluster of eager amateurs whose concern with the good of "society" was almost professional. Then this irruption of welfare-workerism flowed over into politics, with the calamitous consequences which we all now are seeing with dismay. Mr. Lewis's book follows the career of a man, not a bad man at all, who gravitated into welfare-workerism, being good for nothing else, and carried through on it to success, with the aid of an able, realistic and unscrupulous wife. Mr. Lewis's lines are drawn heavily, but they are firm and strong, as a good pamphleteer's lines must be, to be effective; and his book is effective. Mr. Lewis gives so clear a view of mawkish sentimentalism playing into the hand of vicious nonsense that one who has looked at it is unlikely ever to forget it.

New York: Random House. 438 pp. \$2.50.

AMERICA, RUSSIA, AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE POST-WAR WORLD.

By John L. Childs and George S. Counts.

If governments kept their word this book would be worth more than it is. Since they notoriously do not, it is worth very little. Any government's word is "good for this day and train only." It will be kept as long as there is anything to be gained by keeping it, and no longer. These authors have set out to find a basis of post-war agreement on which the United States and Russia can collaborate in arranging terms of peace. They make a rather interesting job of it, leading off with a long exordium tending to show that Russia isn't any longer Communistic "to hurt," and ending with a list of mutual concessions on the strength of which we and Comrade Joe could happily play ball. Practically, it does not amount to a hill of beans, but as a flight of academic fancy it is worth reading. As things look now, the war ought to leave Comrade Joe in a pretty good position; and while he would probably be polite and pleasant about it, there seems no reason why he should commit himself to much of anything in advance of the fact. Certainly up to now he has shown that he knows how to keep the boys guessing, and one does not see anything against his continuing to do so. Meanwhile, books like this do no great harm, and by giving busybodies something to occupy their minds, perhaps they do some good.

New York: The John Day Co. 92 pp. \$1.25.

THE FREEDOM TO BE FREE.

By James Marshall.

Like the curate's egg, this book is very good in spots. The most that can be said for it,—and it is a great deal to say,—is that it is a thoroughly good-hearted book. It gives evidence of being written by a good-hearted man who is worried and puzzled by a number of things which he does not understand very well, and is trying to clear his mind by writing about them. In substance, it is one more in the endless string of treatises on "democracy" with plans for world-organization when the time comes. It is by no means a necessary book, and in missing it one misses nothing but a general impression of kindness and good will.

New York: The John Day Co. 277 pp. \$2.50.

EDUCATION FOR A WORLD ADRIFT.

By Sir Richard Livingstone.

This is by far the best treatment of the subject that I have seen in any modern work. It is written by an Englishman for English readers, but do not be afraid of it on that account. Read it. With American education now wholly under control of the State, it is more than ever important to have some sort of measure by which its quality and value can be judged. What is the next batch of State-educated Americans going to be like? Has the State a satisfactory idea of what they ought to be like? Is its system designed for turning out educated men and women, or merely for training industrial and professional specialists? Does the State want them to be mature and thoughtful citizens or raw and docile routineers? Does it want them to have a keen and jealous sense of what is really first-rate—first-rate in literature, in the arts, in religion, in a philosophy of existence, in social life, in manners, in human character, in everything? These are some of the questions that parents are facing today, and this book throws a clearer light on them than any other I know.

New York: Cambridge University Press. 158 pp. \$1.50.

NOW IS THE MOMENT.

By Harold Rugg.

Good collectivist-liberal doctrine set off by tub-thumping and vigorous jabs at "the isolationist, die-hard Right, and its vicious press." It contemplates a nation of sheep tenderly shepherded from Washington by our ex-Secretary of Agriculture—some appropriateness in that—and "his liberal associates," all towards the making of a "tense, dynamic, interdependent, and organized world." Just so;—well, for those who think they want that sort of thing, here is the very book which will tell them how to get it and keep them in high spirits while they are on their way.

New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce. 274 pp. \$2.50.

WAR AND EDUCATION.

By Porter Sargent.

Porter Sargent is the *enfant terrible* of pedagogy. For twenty-seven years he has published an annual *Handbook of Private Schools*, in which he regularly takes a heavy fall out of Dr. Dryas-

dust, thus delighting crowds of the irreverent. The catch is that he rather has Dryasdust on the hip, because he runs a big business as an adviser to parents concerning a choice of schools and colleges for their children. Therefore Dr. Dryasdust needs him and has to have him, so he pretty well also has to put up with Sargent's annoying habit of biting every nutmeg before he buys it. For some time Sargent has employed a staff of secretaries who burrow through virtually everything that is published with relation to public affairs; and by this means he has documented a series of books which for purposes of reference are simply invaluable. This book is the fifth in the series; the others are *Education in War-Time*, *Getting Us Into War*,—a great contemporary

record of changes in public opinion in the three years 1938-'41,—*What Makes Lives*, and *Human Affairs*. This fifth work is a study of tendencies in education at the present time, without opinion or dogma, but merely interpretative. Like the others, it is a marvel of documentation. Like the others also, it must not be regarded as a technical work addressed only to those whose interest in its content is professional. It is distinctly not that. In a word, Sargent's series is a powerful aid to intelligent citizenship, and any one who is interested in becoming an intelligent citizen may take it that the series is personally and particularly addressed to him.

A. J. N.

Boston: Published by the Author. 504 pp. \$4.00.

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Vol. 1, No. 3

July 15, 1943

THE SPIRIT OF ENTERPRISE. *By Edgar M. Queeny.*

In importance, this book stands side by side with Mrs. Paterson's *The God of the Machine*, which was noticed in last month's issue of this *Review*. Mrs. Paterson's work deals with the theory and philosophy of individualism, and Mr. Queeny's deals with the practice of it. Taken together, the two make a complete manual for the American individualist who really wants to know where he stands and why he stands there. Collectivism in this country has gone as far as it has because collectivists all "know their stuff" and know how to use it. The individualists, especially individualist businessmen, have never known their stuff, and do not know it now, for the simple reason that they have been too lazy-minded to learn it or to pay any attention to the warnings of those who were better informed and long ago saw what was coming. They have been content to "leave all that sort of thing to the highbrows." In my humble opinion, any businessman who persists in that attitude, especially now that Mrs. Paterson's book and Mr. Queeny's are available at something under five dollars for the two, pretty well deserves the worst that collectivism will do to him.

The chairman of Monsanto Chemicals presumably has as many calls on his time and attention as most industrialists have; but he was willing to take the time and trouble to learn his stuff. It is a vast satisfaction to find an industrialist who refuses to remain on the defensive, and has made thorough and painstaking preparation to launch a *blitzkrieg*. In this book there is none of the stupid unconvincing *ex parte* claptrap churned out by the common or garden variety of "public-relations counsel" as a mere plea-in-avoid-

ance. Mr. Queeny has gone through the literature of individualism from the ground up, and then applied what he learned to the wealth of material with which his experience and observation as a trained businessman have furnished him; and this book is the result. When Mrs. Paterson gets through, there is nothing left of collectivism as a philosophy. When Mr. Queeny gets through, there is nothing left of collectivism as a system for the conduct of practical affairs.

Mr. Queeny begins by showing the material results accomplished by free men working in a relatively free economy, and then goes on to show the astonishing response which the left-over vitality of that system has made to the demands which war puts upon production; and this in spite of a decade's devitalizing drain due to the malignant growth of collectivism. If I were a businessman, the thing about collectivism that I should resent most bitterly is its parasitic character. All it ever contemplates is to "take over." Like a cancer, it only attacks and despoils the substance of a healthy tissue. Collectivism does not start at scratch. It takes over the achievements built up by social power, and exploits them; and when it tries to do anything with them on its own account, the results are invariably such as we are seeing in Washington today. Whatever limited success it ever makes is made only by taking over the brains and the administrative skill of persons who have been disciplined under a system of voluntary coöperation.

Mr. Queeny then goes on, like the Declaration of Independence, to give a bill of particulars. He lists and expounds the specific grievances which the American businessman has against the American variant of collectivism known as the New

Deal. The sum of these grievances amounts to a terrible indictment, documented explicitly and in detail, exhibiting every known vice, I believe, of all that are historically characteristic of an irresponsible bureaucracy. King George and his courtiers got off no worse at the hands of Mr. Jefferson than Mr. Roosevelt and his janizaries get off at the hands of Mr. Queeny. The record is simply disgraceful. What makes it the more impressive is that Mr. Queeny's recital is as matter-of-fact and as impersonal as the operation of an adding machine. Also, like Mr. Jefferson's recital of the colonists' grievances, it is thoroughly dignified; Mr. Queeny has none of the tricks of the attorney's trade. The invariable tone and temper of his work are as convincing as his irrefutable facts and figures are.

Mr. Queeny is hopeful for the future, and the grounds of his hope are reasonable and sensible. He sees, as we all do, that the character of our government is completely changed. It is no longer representative, no longer republican. It is no longer a government of laws, but of men. Americans today are governed by executive decrees and bureaucratic orders, and the amusing thing is that the basic theory of such government is exactly the one which those same Americans are fighting to destroy in other countries. Mr. Queeny hopes, not entirely without reason, that Congress may put its foot down on that kind of government, and steer the country back once more into something like a republican system. What Congress does, however, is what the people make it do by holding the bull-whip over it. There is no

other way; and Mr. Queeny seems as well aware as the rest of us that this is so.

His book brings the matter to that conclusion and leaves it there, as it rightfully should do. He has done his full duty as citizen and businessman, and done it superbly well. Perhaps his fellow-citizens will not agree with him. They may be willing to have their old theory of representative government disallowed and replaced by the current theory of irresponsible despotism. They may prefer to go on leading a State-managed existence under an autocracy. If so, there is nothing more to be said; they are within their rights and their preference must be respected. But the point of Mr. Queeny's book is that as a people we are now where we must declare ourselves while there is still the ghost of a chance to make the popular will effective. If indeed there still is such a chance, we have no time to lose before deciding whether we shall fish or cut bait. If we want the kind of thing that Mr. Queeny exposes, we have the sovereign and inalienable right to our preference, and should speak up and say so. If we don't like it and don't want it, we are within our rights and should speak up for our choice. But while we make up our minds we had better be sure that we know exactly what this radical change of governmental theory means, and what it will lead to; and Mr. Queeny's book, backed up by Mrs. Paterson's, will give us all the information necessary.

New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 267 pp. \$2.00.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

By Hendrik Willem van Loon.

The trouble with children's books is that they are written for children. When a child gets through with one of them, he is through with it. Only once in a blue moon do we find a book like this one, written for children of any age, a book that no child ever gets through with. It will have as much to say to him on the last day of his life as when he first opened it. Mr. van Loon's little work is a perfect illustration of the great truth that a man is known by his friends, no matter in what period they may be living. Knowing the people of the Low Countries as well as I do, I venture to predict that fifty years from now, or five hundred, the man who will best understand Mr. Jefferson, and whose interpretation of him can be trusted without reserve, will be a learned,

scholarly, experienced, liberty-loving Dutchman. If Mr. van Loon had toiled up the slope of Monticello a hundred and thirty years ago, the great and good old man would have read his accomplishments and his inmost nature at a glance, and would be rejoiced at having found him.

Mr. van Loon's book is peculiarly valuable just now. Any parent who has a vestige of American spirit left in him needs it as a family antidote and antiseptic against the flood of libelous nonsense about "the great democrat" which is being poured out during this anniversary year. All I have read of this literature amounts to an effort to prove that "the great democrat" was somehow the father and foster father of the New Deal; and the method of proof is the utterly disingenuous one of using detached quotations. By the same method I can prove, and hereby do prove, that

King David was an atheist, because he said, "There is no God." He did say it, plump and plain—look it up, Psalm xiv, 1. But since detached quotations from Mr. Jefferson seem to be so much in order, I might venture to drop in one or two which for some reason the collectivists never mention. For instance, "When we must wait for Washington to tell us when to sow and when to reap, we shall soon want bread." Mr. Wallace's record performances in the Department of Agriculture make things look alarmingly that way right now. Again, in 1800 Mr. Jefferson wrote Granger that "a single consolidated government would become the most corrupt government on earth," and this also seems highly probable.

No, collectivist New Dealers are hardly the right people to assess Mr. Jefferson's qualities;—better fall back on Mr. van Loon, who really has some idea of what he is talking about, and has no ax to grind. Only a few weeks ago—God help us all!—a man high in the Administration told one of my friends that "after this war we shall have less liberty, but more democracy." Just imagine what Mr. Jefferson would think of a miserable little coot like that! Henry Adams said that the mere succession of Presidents from Washington to Grant was almost enough in itself to upset the whole theory of progressive evolution; and if Adams had lived twenty years longer, I believe he would have said it was quite enough.

I have not read everything that has been written about Mr. Jefferson this year. Some of it may be honest and very good. I hope so; but I can speak only of what I have seen. In any case, Mr. van Loon's book is something for you and your children to tie to. In the first place, Mr. van Loon knows a gentleman when he sees one, and can describe him accurately in detail; and none too many of us can do either. He also knows that there are a few things—for instance, libeling a dead man—which a gentleman just doesn't do. Furthermore, he is a Dutchman, and Dutchmen understand liberty because they have had to fight like wildcats for it instead of having it dropped in their lap from the hand of the Almighty, without sense enough to keep it when they had it, or gumption enough to get it back when they lost it. All that Americans know about liberty would not qualify them for the kindergarten grade in Holland. Mr. van Loon's idea of liberty stems from the land of the De Witts, of William the Taciturn, of Tromp and De Ruijter, and what those gentry did not know about liberty, and how to get it, and how to hold on to it when you have it, is not worth knowing. All this, combined with great

learning and literary ability, is what makes Mr. van Loon precisely the right interpreter of the incomparable many-sided genius which had its birth in the county of Albemarle, Virginia, two hundred years ago.

New York: Dodd, Mead and Co. 106 pp. \$2.50.

ECONOMIC FREEDOM.

By Charles E. Noyes.

Fundamental economists will say, rightly enough, that at some points this work is superficial, and at some it even displays ignorance. On the other hand, a careless reader may put Mr. Noyes down as just another economic planner, but this is not so, for he does not present any detailed plan or program. But never mind about all that.

The book, taken as a whole, is worth close attention and a great deal of thought. It is valuable, first, because of the immense amount of clear light it throws on the economic and political situation of America at the present time. Second, it maintains the position that the outcome of this situation is up to the people of this country—that is, to the individual American, and to no one else. It is distinctly not up to a collectivist government which is always trying to play second Providence and play politics at the same time. In Mr. Noyes' opinion, no centralized government was ever yet, or ever will be, good enough or wise enough to do duty for the composite goodness and wisdom of a whole people. If there is anything at all in democracy, the people cannot shirk responsibility by giving letters-of-marque to a *Führer* and his horde of bureaucrats. They must make decisions at every step of the way, and see to it that they are carried out.

If our people are up to doing this, Mr. Noyes is sure that they can make this war bring the country out as the richest and most productive in the world. If they are not up to it, barring a miracle, nothing will save them from economic and political catastrophe. Mr. Noyes shows that the war can end leaving us with a national income of \$150 billion and a productive power which can easily add another \$100 billion in ten years, but it can also drop us back to the pre-war level of \$80 or \$90 billion; and the choice is up to the intelligence and wisdom of the people. Mr. Noyes' moderation, his unfailing good sense, and his technical knowledge, give this book great value; and his lucid easy style makes it as attractive as it is useful.

New York: Harper and Bros. 231 pp. \$2.50.

THE ENGLISH PEOPLE.

By **D. W. Brogan.**

This is one of the two best books on the subject; the other, and in some respects the more informative, is the great German work of Dibelius, published here by *Harper* in 1930. Just now the American would do well to read both. Since some people are urging a sort of companionate marriage with Britannia, it would obviously be a good thing to find out all we can about the lady, even *ex post factor*. Mr. Brogan thinks that if we did this we would like her even better than we do; and so I suppose his book might be called, in a very restricted sense, a work of propaganda—in fact, he frankly says as much. But in the first place, his work is never aimed directly at anti-English feeling in America, but always at the basis of fact on which that feeling is supposed to rest. Second, he is invariably objective and judicial. Like the German Dibelius, he has the outsider's point of view on English character and institutions. He is a Scot, and Scots are essentially quite as complete strangers to the English mind and temperament as we are. Hence his book shows none of the many unconscious spontaneous reactions which a native author could not suppress. The most inveterate hater of England could never once suspect that he was being trifled with or that something was being "put over" on him. Mr. Brogan has great learning, he is a most acute observer, he writes with delightful ease and grace, and his work is replete with sound, supple Scots' common sense. In particular, his preface is a masterpiece. Its observations on the political perfectionist, the moralist doctrinaire, the idealistic planner, the believer in "political plastics," are something for Americans to learn by heart. Such people are the primal curse of this country, and since they are now on top of the world, it is high time we began to get their measure and discover what egregiously mischievous beings they are.

New York: A. A. Knopf. 296 pp. \$2.75.

THE NEW ORDER IN THE CHURCH.

By **William Adams Brown.**

The usual run of impossibilist literature on this subject reminds one of Falstaff's unbalanced diet—a half-pennyworth of bread to an intolerable deal of sack. A great surfeit of this sort of thing has been going the rounds lately in books and periodicals, all to the effect that the Church ought to be doing this-that-and-the-other to meet its responsibilities in the new social order, whatever that may be. It is therefore uncommonly

satisfactory to find a book like Mr. Brown's which treats the subject with unfailing common sense. I have no idea who or what Mr. Brown is, but I am free to say that if he is not a Scotsman he ought to be. Such a book ought by rights to hail from the land of Reid and Dugald Stewart. This is the best praise one can give it, and it deserves the best.

The book is an effort to discover and delimit a practicable basis of common activity among the various divisions of Christendom. It is all very well to say that "the Church ought" to do this-or-that; but as a matter of hard fact, what the Church ought to do is very strictly limited by what it can do. "Church unity" is an admirable ideal, but just how far and in just what ways is it practicable? These questions are old, and have often been threshed over, but I have never before happened to see a treatment of them which is at once so thorough, so explicit, so rigorously sensible, and leading to so reasonable, sound and (as it seems to me) so easily acceptable a conclusion. *Nashville: The Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.* 177 pp. \$2.00.

CONSUMER AND OPINION RESEARCH.

By **Albert B. Blankenship.**

This is a highly technical work, of interest to businessmen concerned with "polls" and surveys for determining public opinion. It analyzes the technique of the questionnaire in a very thorough manner. As well as a layman can judge, its conclusions seem moderate and sensible, and in its particular field of enterprise it is no doubt authoritative and useful.

New York: Harper and Bros. 231 pp. \$3.00.

A DYNAMIC CAPITALISM.

By **C. William Hazelett.**

If a person lives to read, he will find some good things here and there in this book, and some amusing things. On the other hand, if he reads to live, he can safely pass it by. In sum, Mr. Hazelett presents a scheme whereby taxes, instead of being a drag on production, can be made an incentive to production. He puts his politico-economic philosophy together under the name of *Incentivism*. Like most schemes for the mass-improvement of incorporated humanity, *Incentivism* would probably work first-rate in a society of just men made perfect. The trouble is, first, that we have no such society; and, second, if we had such a society almost any scheme would do about as well as any other, and we should not need Mr. Hazelett's.

New York: Harper and Bros. 172 pp. \$2.50.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, Editor

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THESE next two months are a sort of closed season on books. Publishing runs on half-steam, and nothing of much importance comes out until things pick up again in early October. This year the summer crop is uncommonly slim, owing to the restrictions on materials, so that even the flood of superficial books about the war is cut down to a trickle. The only publishing concern that seems to be going on full time is the government's propaganda-mill in Washington. Under these circumstances a reviewer has nothing to recommend in the way of books that are fresh off the press. This is not a bad thing for the reviewer, however, because it gives him a chance at the pleasanter task of talking in a general way about a variety of matters suggested by books which are fairly recent, but which have had time enough to lie around and ripen on the ground.

Channing Pollock's autobiography came out last spring with poor success, which set me thinking about a strange quirk in the American public's reading habits. Why is it that our public shies away from biographies and autobiographies of people connected with the stage? I have not looked into the matter statistically at all, but as far as common observation goes I do not recall a single work of this kind that aroused any general interest worth talking about. No matter how popular an actor, singer or dramatist may have been, no matter how interesting his personality or how brilliant his career, the printed record of his life never "took" with the public to any extent. Interest in stage-people, although it may be momentarily intense, seems to be even more fleeting and ephemeral than interest in

politicians. Biographies of America's greatest stage-figures, Edwin Booth and Joseph Jefferson, had a small sale. Mr. G. B. Shaw is one of the most interesting characters of our time, and he is also a finished expert at managing publicity, yet I doubt that the sale of his authorized biography, recently published, has been anything like what one would expect.

The same thing is true of stage-history. Vaudeville flourished at a great rate in this country for exactly half a century, and then suddenly died out. Three or four years ago some one published an excellent history of vaudeville in those fifty years. I found the story so fascinating that I read it twice over, and still dip into it for an odd half-hour, now and then. The point is that if the book interested me to that extent, it would interest anybody, for I know nothing whatever about vaudeville, and care less. Just once in my early youth I dropped in on a vaudeville show—a first-class one—and I would not do it again if I were paid for it. But as a piece of history, an exhibit of an important amusement-factor in the life of a people, the book was more than interesting, it was delightful, and those who missed it missed a great deal of pleasure. Yet I understand that as a publishing venture it was by no means a success.

I can give the same recommendation, on the same grounds, to Channing Pollock's *Harvest of My Years*, which was published last spring. If it interested me, as it did profoundly, I should say it would interest anybody, since it deals with matters which are almost as far off my beat as it is possible to get. In brief, it is a success-story of a writer and lecturer—a person whose concern

with the public has been chiefly by way of the stage and the platform. For many years I have been in no position to follow the fortunes of the American stage, even by hearsay, and I have completely lost track of it. My ignorance of lecturing is equally abysmal. Hence I have no antecedent interest whatever in the great bulk of Mr. Pollock's subject-matter. My only point of sympathetic contact with the book is with the spirit in which it is conceived; and that, of course, counts for a great deal. Like myself, Mr. Pollock is a Spencerian individualist of the deepest dye. Like myself, he has immeasurable hatred and contempt for collectivist bureaucratic tyranny, and he regards the State as the common enemy of all honest, industrious and decent men. His book therefore did prepossess me, I admit, because as a whole it bears the unmistakable mark of the children of light. But quite aside from this, Mr. Pollock's workmanship enables him to transmute a mass of matter of which I know nothing and for which I care nothing, into something so interesting and prepossessing that I would have lost a great deal in passing it by; and, as I said, if this is true for me, it should be true for anybody.

Curiously, though, readers seem never to apply the same criteria to writing that they apply to the other graphic arts. A Ruijsdael can paint the corner of a cow-barn, or a Vermeer can do the portrait of a repulsive looking, tuberculous, adenoidal young girl, and we are ravished by the artist's workmanship. But when it comes to reading, we are interested only in the subject, and workmanship counts for almost nothing. I don't know why this should be so, but it is so.

II

THE literature that comes out of Washington always stirs up a bothersome question in my mind, about the mental make-up of the orthodox New Dealer. Is he straight knave, or is he straight fool, or is he some uncouth combination of the two? I wish I knew. In reviewing Mr. Queeny's book last month I noticed that he gives the New Dealer much more credit than I would, and I think many representative businessmen have a far more charitable view of him than I am naturally inclined to take. A year ago, talking with the chairman of an immense industry who had just come up from a tussle with the bureaucracy in Washington, I remarked that the New Dealers

had pretty well split the country into kindling wood. "Yes, they have," he said, "and with the best intentions in the world."

"Nonsense!" I replied, "I don't believe one of them has an honest hair in his head."

He laughed. "I don't blame you for thinking so," he said, "but as a matter of fact you're wrong. They are simply ignorant fanatics on a rampage to save the world. They have a swarm of crooks around them as advisers, but they themselves are not crooks, except maybe one or two at the very top. Things might go better if they were. A crook can listen to reason, if he wants to, but a psychopath with his head full of crazy notions can't. Paranoiacs in power have always made a worse mess than crooks in power, and probably always will."

My thoughts were lately set going again in this direction by my perusal of a small volume of Mr. Wallace's speeches, called *The Century of the Common Man*. It left me in much the same puzzled state in which I found myself after reading Mr. Willkie's *One World*. If Mr. Wallace is an opportunist demagogue—that is to say, an adroit political rogue—one must perforce take off one's hat to him, for he is certainly first-class in his chosen line of activity. He gets results. His book leaves you as happy and groggy and rarin' to crusade for righteousness, as if you had been listening to Peter the Hermit or had been shot full of hop. On the other hand, if he is simply a zealous fool—a born fool, for which there is no help—then the case is somewhat different. On that hypothesis one has to disregard Mr. Wallace's irruptions of sentimentalism and examine the book by the light of ordinary good sense.

The thing for a reader to do is to put a few basic questions to Mr. Wallace at almost every page of his book, and make a guess at his probable answer. For instance, on page 6 he speaks of "the privileges of the Bill of Rights." What privileges? Does Mr. Wallace imply that the Bill of Rights is not a bill of rights, but merely a list of privileges conferred by the State, and revocable at the State's pleasure? Is he putting out a sly suggestion that the citizen has no rights which the State is bound to respect? Or is he too crack-brained to know the difference between a right and a privilege, too ignorant to perceive that "privileges of the Bill of Rights" is a resounding contradiction in terms? Once more I say I wish I knew.

Again, Mr. Wallace says on page 18 that the people, in their crusade for vindicating human

dignity, "hold as their *credo* the Four Freedoms." Is he quite serious about that, or is he putting his tongue in his cheek? It might be remarked that political prisoners usually have had all four, as Mr. A. E. Stevenson has already pointed out in the instance of Eugene Debs. Bonnivard, martyr for liberty, had them. He was free from fear, because he was hived up in the castle of Chillon, and nobody could get at him. He was free from want, for he got his food regularly and with no effort. He had freedom of speech, for nobody listened to him; and he had freedom of religion, for nobody cared what he did in that way. Bonnivard seems to show a fairly good example of State-managed freedom, and Mr. Wallace's book strongly suggests that this is pretty much the kind of freedom he would bestow on this nation and on the world at large.

I have not space to deal with all Mr. Wallace's vagaries, but I think I have shown that all one needs for the task is common sense. He is strong for a world at peace, kept at peace under duress. Like Buck Fanshaw, he is a man of peace and he will have peace, if somebody has to be carried out on a shutter. He is strong for democracy—his kind, of course; which, when all is said and done, comes to nothing but a horse-doctor's dose of State capitalism in a system of State-enforced coöperation—in plain language, a régime of thorough-going State-slavery. Again, in his speech on Russia he says that his "new democracy," whatever that is, "abhors imperialism," and then he ends by saying that he believes the Russian and American peoples together will throw their influence "on the side of building a new democracy which will be the hope of all the world." I trust that Mr. Wallace has not forgotten to send a marked copy of this speech to Comrade Joe.

What puzzles me most in Mr. Wallace's book is his proposal to keep a flock of armed missionaries abroad to rewrite German textbooks and reform the education of German children. As the proposal of a consummate ass, this would be understandable. It would be equally understandable as the proposal of a clever political rogue, playing to a charmed and enthusiastic gallery. From the beginning, our great national weakness has been our belief in ourselves as the chosen people, born to set the world right on any and every matter, all the way from morals and manners to politics and business methods. The doctrine of the *Herrenvolk* has been so completely ours that I dare say we could sue our erring

brother Hitler for infringement of copyright, and get damages. Mr. Wallace's proposal to supervise German education at the point of the bayonet—which is obviously ridiculous in any case—would touch off this dangerous spirit like a spark in tinder. Who can tell whether he meant it to do that, or whether he merely opened his mouth and let it say what it liked? Not I.

No, I thought I knew something in a general way about the mental make-up of my fellow beings, but when it comes to the real simon-pure New Dealer I simply own beat. I can't make him out.

III

MR. KNOPF, who is one of the most public-spirited of publishers as well as one of the ablest, has brought out a new edition of Brooks Adams's *Law of Civilization and Decay*, first published in America by Macmillan in 1896. This great work is the first American attempt to interpret the history of Western society in a truly scientific spirit. Its reappearance at this time is so opportune that I can hardly be too insistent on recommending it to every reader who wants to know where we are, and how we got here, and where we are going from here.

The sight of it reminded me of how many clear, explicit and unheeded warnings of impending catastrophe we have had. Two years ago one of my friends who really understands history was approached by a man saying, in a great state of excitement, that the world had gone crazy. My friend replied, "You have watched this coming for forty years, and now that it's here, you say the world has gone crazy!" Just so. Now that the whole of Western society is on the brink of dissolution, we can perhaps profitably recall a few of the many—and they were many—who saw clearly what was coming, and did their level best to warn us against it.

In England, the first was a woman, Mrs. Barbauld, a poetess, in 1811, when the cloud of destiny was no bigger than a man's hand—but she saw it plainly. Cobbett saw it. Spencer published his *Social Statics* in 1851, and *The Man vs. The State* in 1885. In 1898 he wrote to Grant Allen, "I said just as you say, that we are in course of rebarbarization, and that there is no prospect but that of military despotisms, which we are rapidly approaching." Arnold, Carlyle, Ruskin, Kingsley—one might think the clear fore-

cast of minds like these was worth some attention, but it got none.

In Germany, two of the greatest intellects of Europe were perfectly explicit about it; these were Goethe and Niebuhr. Later came Nicolai and Spengler. In Switzerland, Burckhardt; in Austria, Gumpłowicz. In France, Nordau; in Russia, Tourgueniev. In modern Spain, de Madariaga and Ortega y Gasset. In America Thomas Jefferson, Henry George, the Adams brothers, Henry and Brooks, and their fellow-townsmen Ralph Adams Cram. Seeing the enormous lack of balance between man's powers of invention, cleverness and sagacity and his powers of wisdom and intelligence, Henry Adams wrote in 1902, "I apprehend for the next hundred years an ultimate colossal cosmic collapse. . . . My belief is that science is to wreck us, and that we are like monkeys monkeying with a loaded shell." Surely this was explicit enough to set any one thinking, but no one paid any attention to it.

So again I recommend *The Law of Civilization and Decay*; and as an added inducement I might say that the easy grace of its workmanship makes it a thing of uncommonly attractive beauty.

IV

IT is rather late in the day for any extended comment on Mr. Henry C. Link's book, *The Return to Religion*. The Macmillan edition has gone through thirty-six printings, and I see that an issue in paper binding has come out lately, which one can pick up almost anywhere for a few cents. There are one or two things about it, however, which will still bear emphasizing. The book is a partial answer to the demand made lately, notably by Mr. Carrel and Mr. Hooton, for a more intensive and diligent study of man and his place in nature. The author is a scientific psychologist, and his work is distinctly not to be confused

with that of the psychoanalyst. He calls attention to the formidable number of persons in this country who are mentally off balance, and gives a general summary of his experience in dealing with various disorders, in his capacity as a practicing psychologist.

What interests me most is that he sees so clearly the fulfilment of Goethe's prophecy, made more than a century ago, that mankind would progress greatly in cleverness and sagacity, but not at all in intelligence and wisdom. With all the achievements of science, all the fruits of inventive genius, man is no wiser, no better, no happier, than he was before he had them. This is a most significant fact, surely, but hardly any one notices it or makes any serious effort to account for it. Mr. Link has done both.

Then, too, Mr. Link puts his finger firmly on the essential weakness of all the official panaceas for happiness which are being put forward. They take account only of what can be bought with money; the American social idealist's god is his belly, as St. Paul said of certain others. In his chapter on the "Abundant Life," which we should all be learning by heart, Mr. Link calls this truly "the most disastrous and destroying ideal which could possibly be offered." If our social planners had the slightest contact with reality, one would think they could hardly fail to see it so; but they have no such contact.

The Harvest of My Years. By Channing Pollock. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 375 pp. \$3.50.

The Century of the Common Man. By Henry A. Wallace. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock. 96 pp. \$1.50.

The Law of Civilization and Decay. By Brooks Adams. New York: A. A. Knopf. 349 pp. \$3.50.

The Return to Religion. By Henry C. Link. New York: The Macmillan Co. 181 pp. \$1.00.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, Editor

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IN a letter the other day one of my friends said, "There is food for thought in the fact that it remained for two women, *La Paterson* and *Rose Wilder Lane*, to write the only intelligible books on individualism produced here this century." He went on with some witty remarks about the chance that before long this country will become a matriarchy, with a few assorted males kept in harems for breeding-purposes, somewhat as the bees do. This reminded me that already, twenty years ago, the dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Inge, described the United States as "an icewater-drinking gynecocracy." It is an interesting idea, and perhaps not so terrifying as my friend regards it. Women certainly could not make a worse mess of public affairs than men have made and are still making, and perhaps there is some sort of desperate chance that they might do better.

But however this may be, the impressive fact does remain exactly as my friend stated it. For fifty years we men have been writing at high speed about how to *act* in public affairs, but when it comes to the all-important matter of being told how to *think* in public affairs, we have to fall back on the work of two women! Somehow (probably because I am a man) I find this rather inglorious and mortifying. We men have been holding forth very learnedly on what to *do* about quotas, social security, taxation, population-pressure, planned economies, inflation, peace-plans and such-like, with never a hint that there are basic principles involved and that if we don't *think* straight on the line of those principles, what we do is sure to be wrong. Then two women who really understand those principles come along and state

them, and thereby show that ninety-nine-point-nine per cent of what we men have been saying is pernicious nonsense. In the same way, many years ago there was great excitement over various types of the perpetual-motion machine, until people who understood the fundamental principles of physics showed that all types were alike worthless, and that nothing of the kind could possibly work.

Mrs. Lane's book, *The Discovery of Freedom*, distinctly gained nothing by being "written at white heat," as her publishers say it was. She makes a great many statements which, to say the least, are questionable. The curious thing, however, is that all these, without exception, are *obiter dicta*. None of them has any bearing on the actual substance of her work. When it comes to anything fundamental, Mrs. Lane never makes a mistake. She is always right. In this respect the book is really remarkable. I do not remember ever reading one which managed to make so many errors on points of no importance without sometimes going wrong on one which is important.

The reading public should be well advised of this peculiarity, as a measure of justice to Mrs. Lane. An unfriendly reviewer could easily make her book appear to be a tissue of extravagance, ignorance, worthlessness, when as a matter of fact it is thoroughly sound in every essential and as my friend observed, in its exposition of individualism's philosophy it is one of the two great books of our period.

Let me illustrate the point I am making, so that there can be no mistake about it. The first three sections of Mrs. Lane's chapter on the Third Attempt are sound as they can be, in the main; yet I could dissect enough errors out of them to

discredit the book completely,—and all of them irrelevant. For instance, she speaks of Edmund Burke as a “British darling” and a “sleek crook.” One can only say that on both these counts Mrs. Lane is about as far away from the truth as it is possible to get, and one could make great sport with her in proving it. Again, in her chapter on War she says that while Americans have fought wars and even begun them, “they have never *made* a war.” What an astonishing statement! But she even caps this by saying in her next sentence that in every war Americans have fought, “they have fought to defend the individual against the aggressions of men who did not recognize the fact of individual freedom.” Really, now—now, really—if the friendliest of critics is bound to admit that things like this are a bit on the unhistorical side, what can Mrs. Lane expect from an unfriendly critic?

But I repeat, a reader who lets himself be put off by such aberrations is throwing away a priceless baby with some slightly rancid bathwater. Changing my metaphor a little, Mrs. Lane’s opening chapters are so full of dynamite that if ever the American people have common sense enough to touch it off, our worst political and social superstitions will be blown to atoms. Her analysis of Authority is the best I have ever seen, and it is matched by her analysis of Society. Authority and Society are now more than ever the two great bugaboos of our existence; well, what *is* Authority, what *is* Society? Mrs. Lane strips off their Hallowe’en disguise and shows us a couple of pumpkins fantastically carved, with a couple of lighted candles inside,—mere impotent frauds, nothing in the world to be afraid of, still less to stand in awe of or bother one’s brains about.

There is small choice among such superb analyses as Mrs. Lane’s, but as good as any of them is her treatment of the Planned Economies. Nothing could be better. Europe has always had economies planned in a style to make our New Deal experts look like bush-leaguers. There is a touch of humor in the history of these efforts. Mrs. Lane cites Buckle and Blanqui to show that in England under George III, for example, when the economy was planned down so fine that nobody could do any business, it was the smugglers, grafters, bootleggers and pirates who kept production from going to pieces. We all remember (though Mrs. Lane does not mention it) that under prohibition it was the bootleggers who held the market together; and only the other day a friend remarked to me that for the same reason

the most useful members of our society today are the black-marketeers.

Mrs. Lane makes the excellent point, and a perfectly sound one, that people usually get along better under lazy, selfish, shiftless rulers than under those who are busy and conscientious. She makes many interesting comparisons to bring this out. She also has several invaluable pages on the fact which so few of us know and fewer understand, that all there is to the State is *force*. Force is all it has at its command to use, and Mrs. Lane gives a convincing and irrefutable disquisition on what happens when force is used in an attempt to control productive energy. She does not say so, but any one can see that every statement she makes is borne out by what is taking place in the United States today.

One of the very finest things in the book is Mrs. Lane’s treatment of the basic principle of American government. It will not make her book a best seller in Washington, I am afraid, but if Mr. Roosevelt would like to look into it he will find it on pages 189, 190. Mr. Wallace should have his prayerful attention drawn to what is said there about the difference in *principle* as well as fact, between an English and an American Bill of Rights. The British bill is a list of freedoms which the State permits to its subjects. Our bill is a statement of the uses of force which American citizens do *not* permit to their servants in Washington. There is a thundering big difference here, and if Mr. Wallace could clear his mind about it his observations on the Bill of Rights would be considerably more worth reading than they are.

Mrs. Lane is right in saying that Americans have always led in the Great Rebellion against Authority. That has been their distinction. She believes they will hold this leadership and, in time, will set the whole world free. Perhaps so, and no one would deny that it is an inspiring thought. Mrs. Lane seems quite carried away by it. Things being as they are, however, Americans just now have a deuced whaling life-size job on their hands to set themselves free, and prosaic common sense suggests that they had better let the rest of the world mull along awhile until they get it done.

II

AND so, two women have shown us male scribblers a model of right thinking. This is a great deal, but it is not all that we men are obliged to mark up,—I hope not grudgingly,—to the credit of our contemporary womankind. Another woman, Anne Goodwin

Winslow, has just now come along to show us a model of right *feeling* towards the abc's of human existence, and also a model of such writing as is the despair of all the male writers who are working in the same genre. Her book, *The Dwelling-Place*, is permeated by an exquisitely wise and elevated sentiment towards everything and everyone pertaining to the routine of a life essentially simple, detached, largely solitary,—such a life as so many of us will look at with a touch of wistful envy, for quite unconsciously she has exhibited her own living of that life as a noble, joyous and singularly beautiful achievement.

I do not undertake to say which of the two lessons is at the present time the more important to us men; the lesson in right thinking or in right feeling. One must judge for oneself. The question need not be pressed seriously, however, for here we have both. Both lessons are vastly important, our instructresses are endlessly competent, so since we have the chance, why not take both, and do our earnest best to profit by them? It would seem the part of wisdom and good sense to do that.

III

READING Mrs. Winslow's book helps to put one into the right frame of mind for getting the best out of Mr. Lin Yutang's *Between Tears and Laughter*. If you believe that man is nothing but a digestive and reproductive apparatus, Mr. Lin's book is not for you. If on the other hand you see man as Mrs. Winslow sees him,—if you see him as something more than a mere creature of instinct and appetite,—you will find it a great work, a very great work, just what one needs to illuminate and put a fine finish on other good works like Mr. Hayes's *A Generation of Materialism* and Mr. Hocking's *What Man Can Make of Man*.

Mr. Lin is frankly fed up with the way the Western world regards mankind. The theory of the "economic man" has become a crashing bore,—the idea that the whole content of man's life can be summed up in the production, accumulation and distribution of wealth. He finds that this idea is basic to all we do and say; it is "the very stuff and fiber of modern thinking." We cannot rise above it. It shapes our "social legislation," our measures for "security," making no distinction between human mouths and pig's snouts; and "all the charts and dissertations on food and populations and tariffs are no more than the counting of snouts." As for our innumerable attempts at

peace-planning, all the way from Union Now to Mr. Culbertson, "the idea is that if you segregate the hogs in different sties and throw in enough hog-fodder, with the fences neither too high nor too low between them, the hogs are going to live in peace, and then a millennium will descend upon the earth."

Mr. Lin is bored by this conception of man's nature because, according to him, it simply isn't so and therefore won't work. He holds that as a working theory, it is childishly inadequate. Man has other qualities, other powers besides those of digestion and reproduction, and if they are not reckoned with,—which in our reliance on economism we have not the least idea how to do,—we shall find them a source of endless confusion and trouble. Mr. Lin remarks that other peoples who are not so deep in the tradition of economism as we are, do not take our view of the nature of man. They think that dealing with mankind is rather more of a matter than counting snouts, and therefore they may make difficulties about falling in with our ideas; in fact, they are already making them,—making quite a lot of them. So what then? If they don't like our ideas and won't accept them, what are we to do?

Why of course, obviously, in that case we shall be obliged to use force. Economism has nothing but force to fall back on. All we can say to these obtuse and troublesome peoples is, "Sorry, but if you don't like British-American hog-fodder, we'll just have to push you around." The Hottentot ought to appreciate the offer of a quart of milk a day, but if the wretched man dislikes milk and won't take milk, there is nothing for it but to hand him a punch in the eye. This is as far as we have got with a philosophy of peace, as our peace-plans, which Mr. Lin cites, unquestionably show. So there we are, at the end of our rope.

Manifestly then, the question is: Will force work? Mr. Lin thinks not. Certainly it never has worked—he has that much on his side—and he gives a great many very cogent reasons for believing that it never will. In his opinion, the only thing that has any chance of working is a sound philosophy of peace; and you can't build that on a hog-fodder basis. It can be built on nothing but an entirely different conception of the nature of man. Hence if the United Nations really wish to promote peace, Mr. Lin suggests that they had better revise the British-American "swine-and-slop" conception, and forge out a more substantial one.

Mr. Lin devotes the last half of his book to sug-

gestions of how something of the sort might be done. Peace will not be established by the methods of the imperialist plug-ugly and thug. He takes Mr. Churchill to pieces on that point. Nor will mathematics do it; he makes mincemeat of poor Mr. Culbertson's scheme of peace by point-rationing. He also riddles the method of "geopolitics" expounded by Professor Spykman of Yale University, and he cuts the ground from under the whole system of power-politics. His criticism of all these nostrums is extremely hard to answer. He makes it clear that if World Wars I and II have not sufficiently shown their futility, World War III may, or perhaps IV or V, but at all events some turn of circumstances in the future will do so.

He lays it down flatly that "with our way of thinking, we cannot create or devise a world peace." All our thinking is mechanistic, materialistic, and therefore such also are our nostrums; we cannot establish peace because we "have not the brains for it." The thing is, then, to make a clean sweep of our mechanistic thinking, and get an entirely different view of the nature of man, of human values, of human life. To do this we must first find out how we of the Western world got into this way of mechanistic thinking, we must discover the origins of the mechanistic mind; and from that diagnosis we can perhaps see the way to an effective change of heart and spirit.

Mr. Lin has come into a sort of hereditary right to reason with us in this fashion, for, as he

says, his own people, the Chinese, do not think exclusively in terms of snouts and hog-fodder, and do not put much reliance on purely mechanistic agencies. They have somehow managed to govern their country for 4000 years with no police, no lawyers, and a great general contempt for soldiers. It would seem that such people must have learned something about the nature of man and the management of human life which would be interesting and even perhaps profitable for us to understand a little better than we do. The last eight chapters of *Between Tears and Laughter* are an exposition of some of the things which a people older and wiser than we are have learned from age-long experience crystallized in tradition. One who can take it will find that exposition inestimably precious. But as an honest reviewer, I must repeat my warning that if, like Mr. Churchill and our own New Dealers, you are one of those who interpret man only in terms of hog-fodder and force, you will find nothing anywhere in this book but the silliest kind of incomprehensible moonshine.

The Discovery of Freedom. By Rose Wilder Lane. John Day Company, New York. 262 pp. \$2.50.

The Dwelling-Place. By Anne Goodwin Winslow. A. A. Knopf, Inc., New York. 256 pp. \$2.50.

Between Tears and Laughter. By Lin Yutang. The John Day Co., New York. 216 pp. \$2.50.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, Editor

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THERE are said to be 150 different planning-agencies in the government, corral-count, and by range-count there are probably more amateur planners in the country than there are black cats. The only plan I have seen, however, that seemed to have any sense in it is the one proposed by Mr. Wriston, the president of Brown University, in his book just published, *Challenge To Freedom*. His plan is that we should recover some faith in ourselves, some measure of individual self-confidence, some intelligent belief in individual freedom, and a militant spirit of going to the mat for our convictions. "Getting rid of the New Deal" is all right as far as it goes, but it does not go far; in fact it goes hardly any distance at all. The thing is to get rid of the spirit, the national frame of mind, that brought the New Deal on us. "Canning Roosevelt" is all right, first-rate, but if we can Roosevelt without canning the limp and feeble public spirit that made Roosevelt possible, all we get will be a stooge, as the last election plainly showed.

Mr. Wriston calls this spirit defeatism, which probably answers the purpose well enough in a general way, although there is more to it than what usually goes by that term. He shows that the New Deal was born of defeatism; it was spawned at a time when business, industry, politics, were all in the doldrums of defeatism. There was nowhere any faith, any confidence, in anything; least of all any individual confidence in oneself. He then goes on to demonstrate (and this is the most valuable part of his work) that the whole basic policy of the New Deal is a policy of defeatism. All its measures have been devised

with the primary intent to coddle and foster a lackadaisical dependence on the State to think for us, plan for us, instruct us, manage for us, and ride herd on us in every relation of life.

But this spirit which Mr. Wriston calls defeatism is nothing new or strange. It is not a phenomenon of the last twenty years. It is a habit of mind that has persisted with increasing strength over a very long period. A few lines in Mr. Wriston's book show that he may be more or less aware of this, but the fact is so immeasurably important that it ought to be frankly brought out. For two-thirds of a century Americans have been bred to the vicious habit of running to the State whenever they wanted their pinafores tied or their shoes buttoned. "There ought to be a law" is notoriously proverbial of Americans. When investment-bankers got in a jam, instead of standing up against the iron they rushed to Washington about it. When railway-competition got temporarily out of hand, did the owners stand up and take it? They did not. They ran to Washington faster than a scared dog. We are worried today because the State is in business to the tune of some twenty-odd billion dollars. But how did the State get into business in the first instance, and who put it there? Who got it into the shipping business, canal-boating, highway-building, aviation, and why? Who insisted that the Panama Canal should be built and run as a State enterprise, and why? Who off-loaded the Cape Cod canal on the State, and why? Who got the State into the pork-barrel business, digging and dredging waterways, and putting up costly and superfluous public buildings all over the lots? The history of innumerable enterprises

like these makes one think, time and again, of the rugged individualists from New York who waited on Lincoln, telling him how many million dollars' worth of property they represented, and demanding that he build a fleet of gunboats to be kept in New York harbor for their protection. When they got through, Abe replied, "Well, gentlemen, I've heard you, and all I can say is that if I were as rich as you are and as badly scared as you are, I'd build those ships myself."

So in reading Mr. Wriston's book one must remember that the New Deal is only the sudden culmination of a bad habit of mind which has persisted so long that it has become pretty well ingrained. It is only the sudden sharp attack of pink rattlesnakes and blue-winged bats that winds up a long career of leaning on the old stuff. I should hardly call it defeatism that a good many of us are realizing for the first time that the habit of leaning on the State leads as straight to coercive collectivism as the habit of leaning on heroin leads to the bughouse; and that the one habit is much harder to break than the other. There is room here for a great deal stronger term than defeatism, and I think Mr. Wriston might very well have used it. Mr. Wriston believes the habit can be broken, which of course is so; but breaking it will take a deal of grit and gumption.

Edmund Burke spoke the final word on this subject when he said that "there never was for any length of time a corrupt representation of a virtuous people, or a mean, sluggish, careless people that ever had a good government of any form." Mr. Wriston exposes a record of the New Deal's activities that is simply horrible. It is a record of most flagrant usurpations, malversations, mendacity, prodigality and political favoritism. But it would have been perfectly competent at any time for our representatives in Congress to confront any guilty executive officer with articles of impeachment within forty-eight hours. They could do this now; there is no statute of limitations standing in the way. If they shilly-shallied about this, it was at any time, and still is, perfectly competent for their constituents to take the leg of the chair to them. There is no getting around the logic of Burke's great utterance. Mr. Wriston's book brings this truth out into the clearest light. The New Deal's misfeasances may be all he says they are, but his indictment does not properly lie against the New Deal. Mr. Jefferson wrote Granger in 1800 that if our government were ever completely centralized "it would become the most corrupt govern-

ment on earth." But under a republican civil system with universal suffrage you can't have a completely centralized government unless the people ask for it, and we wouldn't have one now if the people had not distinctly asked for it. So why find fault with the New Deal?

Again, Mr. Roosevelt may be a man of no character, no convictions, no integrity, no intelligence, at heart not even an American. But supposing he is all that, the fact is wholly irrelevant. The only relevant fact, the great big thundering fact, is that the people asked for him, they had four years to find out exactly what sort he is, they asked for him again, and yet again four years later. Now, if on the one hand Mr. Roosevelt's second and third elections were bought, it proves only that the people are largely purchasable. It always takes two to make a bargain. If on the other hand it took twelve years for the people to get Mr. Roosevelt's measure, they were monstrously inattentive and so indifferent as to deserve the worst that any executive could do. When Mr. Jefferson was our minister to France, he wrote Edward Carrington that "if once the people become inattentive to the public affairs, you and I and Congress and Assemblies, judges and governors, shall all become wolves." That is about the size of it, so why waste breath upbraiding Mr. Roosevelt?

Mr. Wriston's book is extremely able, clear, cogent; it is one of the best works in the current literature of individualism. I urge it strongly on the consideration of every reader. It has, however, one defect which I regard as grave; it is pockmarked all over with the word *democracy*. This word never had either a reputable history or a distinct definite meaning. It has long been completely eviscerated, a mere shell or gelatine capsule which any quack can fill with any deleterious nostrum and be sure of getting it down the public's craw. Its use is now the regular trade-mark of writers who are either loose-witted or dishonest, and Mr. Wriston is neither; so I am grieved to find him in such sorry company. I have carefully observed his uses of the word, and have not found a single instance where he would not have gained force by substituting another term or a paraphrase which would not only show the reader at a glance exactly what he meant, but also the only thing he could possibly be understood to mean. In fully half these instances, as the work stands, I can only make a guess at what he means by democracy, and in some few instances he seems really to mean nothing.

BACKING up Mr. Wriston's plan from an entirely different point of view, Mr. Henry J. Taylor comes out with *Men In Motion*. Mr. Wriston is of the academic world. Mr. Taylor is an industrialist who converted himself into a war-correspondent in Africa and the Middle East. This sounds unpromising; but readers should be fully warned against taking Mr. Taylor's book as just one more in the squalid journalistic ruck of "personal experiences" which have so well earned the vigorous and excellent lambasting that Mr. Marquand gives them in *So Little Time*. A good deal of *Men In Motion* can be read lightly, I admit, and should be, but not carelessly, for reading it is like placer mining; if you don't wash all the sand, you may miss a nugget. Mr. Taylor is mature, thoughtful and experienced. His training as a businessman has helped him to see things clearly and to understand what he sees. His observations on public affairs are full of wisdom and common sense, thus making his book a necessary addition to the reader's library of individualism.

Moreover, it contains an abundance of extremely valuable information which has not reached the general public. Few of us know that Africa is half again as large as our North American continent, from the Arctic Circle to Panama. Fewer still know that it is the richest of all the continents;—every line of Mr. Taylor's tenth chapter is an astonishing revelation. Few know that this incredible mass of potential wealth is in the hands of England, France and Belgium, and fewer know that they have done virtually nothing with it.

The point is this: After the war Europe, which is a mere "peninsula of Asia" with no natural resources worth speaking of, will be left grossly overpopulated, utterly impoverished, hopelessly busted. Mr. Taylor shows conclusively that the only thing for it is the old resource, as old as human history, mass-migration. The surplus population has to be somewhere, and if it can't exist where it is it must go where it can exist.

Well, then, where are these people to go? Right at their back door lies an area of eleven million square miles, the richest in the world, practically untouched. They can go there as agricultural and industrial pioneers, exploit that area, and build up a vast immeasurably rich economy for themselves and their descendants. That is exactly what our ancestors did under much harder circumstances. They had to cross the Atlantic un-

der sail to get here, which was not like popping across the Mediterranean under steam, and there were no infatuated idiots to organize a "global" boondoggling system for their benefit. This, then, the Europeans can do. On the other hand, they can split up the migration, move to other countries, and exploit a going concern, a ready-made economy which people like our ancestors have built; and of all economies, naturally, ours is the easiest and juiciest picking.

Men and brethren, don't you sometimes get a little fed up with the idea that this country has no reason for existence except as a good steady producer for Europe? If you do, Mr. Taylor's views of that idea will be a joy to you. What a relief it is at last to hear the voice of sound common sense raised against the outpourings of neurasthenic slumgullion from Europeanized Americans about our duty to Europe! If Mr. Taylor did no more than nail the outrageous lie that we "lay down on Europe" after the last war, his book would be worth twice its cost. We did no such thing. Europe lay down on itself; and as Mr. Taylor shows, there is a right smart chance that after it has worked the global WPA for all it is worth, it will do the same thing again.

Mr. Taylor demonstrates—there is no getting around it—that this country should shut down tight on any more immigration from anywhere. His eleventh chapter shows how much of the pioneering spade-work of establishing an economy we have already done and are doing in Africa, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Newfoundland, Iceland, Greenland,—and all of it free, gratis and for nothing, an outright gift, mainly to England, and the rest to France and Belgium. Read this chapter twice over, then read it again. Then put the book away until after the war, and when you hear complaints about Uncle Shylock who won't let immigrants come in here and get a living, read the chapter again and see what the mean old man has actually done—as a free gift, mind you,—to help them *make* a living for themselves.

The book's treatment of Russia as the great dilemma is the best I have yet seen. Mr. Taylor says, what we all know, that the Four Freedoms are pure political buncombe, and Europeans know it even better than we do. The whole point is that freedom from fear simply can't be established in Europe while the mighty and invincible Russia exists—and this without the slightest disparagement of Comrade Joe and his successors. After the war it will make not the slightest difference whether Russia acts like an angel or like

the devil or does not act at all. The mere presence of so strong a nation will keep the rest of the Continent in a continual dither, just as a strong France did for years, and afterwards a strong Germany.

Mr. Taylor may not be a good American. What with all the self-chosen delegates from Paris, Vienna, Prague, Vilna, Grodno and especially London, who have undertaken to expound Americanism for us, it is pretty hard to say just what a good American is. But if John Adams was a good American, I can vouch for Mr. Taylor. On the other hand, if a good American is something—anything—that the Wallace-Willkie-Roosevelt ilk of Europeanized Americans and their assiduous tagtails would approve of, I think Mr. Taylor can be counted out; and believe me, so can I. Old John lived in the horse-and-buggy period, and by the New Deal's standards he must have been horribly "underprivileged," whatever that means, but his notion of Americanism is still plenty good enough for me, and apparently also it is good enough for Mr. Taylor.

III

MR. TAYLOR ties his book up with Mr. Wriston's by his one observation on the rank absurdity of our trying to floor-manage Europe's affairs when we can't even begin to govern ourselves decently. If ever we had the spirit of even decent self-government, we have manifestly lost it and had better recover it in record time. Now while we are thinking over this unpalatable truth in respect of our condition here at home, Mr. Howard chips in with a complete and dispassionate record of our government's utterly disgraceful behavior in the Far East during the last fifty years. If an American citizen can keep on the windward side of himself long enough to get through it, he will agree with Mr. Wriston that "the American spirit" needs a

few vitamins and that the Star-Spangled Banner could pretty well stand being sent to the cleaners.

America's Role In Asia is not a muck-raking work, nor is it a piece of journalism. It is a highly serious, endlessly well-informed, and admirably objective historical treatise, written by a man who has lived in the Far East for twenty-five years, with access to all the best sources of information about his subject. I shall not examine the book in detail, for it is built around one single subject as indicated by the title, and therefore must be taken as a whole. Notice of specific matters like our betrayal of Korea, our flagitious relation to the opium trade, the propping-up of Japanese imperialism by Theodore Roosevelt—notice of such matters might give pungency to a review, but would obscure its point. They had better be left in their place.

A reviewer's whole point is this: At this particular time the best thing Americans can do for themselves is to make an honest effort at getting their own measure, at finding out what kind of people they actually are; and as Burke said, their government's measure is pretty nearly their own measure. Therefore, quoting Burke once more, the value of books which help us get our government's measure is that "they dispose us to a better sense of our condition." The sophistries of jobholders will not do that, nor yet will newspapers, popular magazines or radio-commentators. A reviewer's business is to show that books like those I have here mentioned will do it and are to be taken on that understanding.

Challenge to Freedom. By Henry M. Wriston. Harper and Bros., New York. 233 pp. \$2.00.

Men In Motion. By Henry J. Taylor. Doubleday, Doran and Co., New York. 297 pp. \$3.00.

America's Role In Asia. By Harry Paxton Howard. Howell-Soskin, New York. 463 pp. \$3.00.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, Editor

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THE new biography of G. K. Chesterton, by Maisie Ward, appears to have been written primarily for the edification of Roman Catholics and Anglo-Catholics. There can be no objection to that. There are a great many Romanists and Anglo-Catholics in the English-speaking countries, and Chesterton was a great religionist; so if Mrs. Ward chose to make their edification her controlling purpose in writing this book, her choice was wholly proper and praiseworthy. Any reasonable person will say that this is beyond dispute or doubt.

Nevertheless, and entirely apart from one's view of this laudable intention, no competent judge can say that the book is a good one, for it is not. To begin with, it is poorly organized. Even the stowage on Mrs. Ward's excellent cargo of Catholicism is so shackling that the book comes into port with an alarming list to starboard. Furthermore, Mrs. Ward's editorial sense is weak; she has not the unerring editorial instinct for what to leave out and what to put in, for where to touch lightly and where to come down with her full weight. Hence her management of detail is most unsatisfactory; she gives a skimpy sentence to some matter which deserves a page, and builds a paragraph out of material worth ten words; sometimes not worth any. The reader therefore has to read with uncommon care in order not to be misled into losing something valuable.

So I am in the somewhat anomalous position of recommending to my readers—and I do recommend it highly—a book which is first of all rather special, and is also, as books go, by no means a good one. I urge my readers to take a chance at it because I do not know many books which

will give them a clearer view of political and social matters that are pressing heavily for their attention at the present time. I might observe here that the three chapters which deal most particularly with such matters are those which the author suspects her readers may think "uninviting" and be tempted to skip. This I believe is a prime specimen of Mrs. Ward's editorial judgment, for when all comes to all, even Anglo-Catholics and Romanists are vertebrated animals existing in society, and a good editor would feel safe in assuming that they are as much interested as other people are in what a man of Chesterton's quality thought of the society in which they live.

If my readers wish to cut their reading down to bare meat, which I rather hope they don't,—it won't harm them any to chew the thing whole, bones and all, and spit out what they can't swallow,—but if they do, the irreducible minimum is the 141 pages containing chapters XVII-XXII; and they might perhaps stretch a point, and add the twenty pages of chapter XXV. Although I do not stipulate this last as "required reading," there are passages in it which have value. These are mainly the quotations from Chesterton himself, and letters from G. B. Shaw, all bearing on the practice of journalism in England.

One thing the reader should do. As he reads of Chesterton's stand on British public affairs, he should keep a comparison with American public affairs constantly in mind. If he is not prepared to do this, he may as well let the book alone. At every point brought out in his reading, he should ask, "How about that in America?" and then stop reading until he has honestly and thoroughly thought out how it actually is in

America. By doing this he will learn enough to make the book worth many times its price; while by reading it simply as a first-rate newspaperman's view of "what happened in England," he won't find it worth a cancelled postage-stamp, save for a very moderate amount of entertainment value.

Chesterton was a journalist; a brilliant and accomplished journalist. In the chapters I have cited you plumb the depths of ignominy to which British journalism descended in Chesterton's day. Well, then, what about American journalism in the same period and after? What about it at the present time? Chesterton was an honest fearless man who started out in life as a Liberal, moved by a noble sympathy for the helpless poor; he hated the economic slavery in which they were held by Mr. Gradgrind, Mr. Bottles, Mr. Plugson of Undershot, and Sir Gorgius Midas. But he saw that the recreant British Liberals since 1850, instead of freeing these slaves, had merely sold them out, little by little, into the worse bondage of State-slavery, which he feared and hated even more than Mr. Gradgrind's. Well, what about Liberalism in America? Has it not done precisely the same thing in the same way?

What about "representative government"? What about the party-system, government by party? What about majority-rule? What about the utter unreality of the whole political scene? What about the futilities of "reform," and the fruitlessness of attempts to improve society by political action? What of Socialism, whether of the Fabian type or any other type? All these matters are brought out in the book, and the reader who takes Chesterton's reaction to them and applies his mind to it in sober earnest will find that he has given himself, with very little labor, a good thorough training for American citizenship. If a person follows through on Chesterton's mind, his lucidity and penetration, his buoyant spirit, his unbreakable integrity and courage, his abounding humor, he will get a much better understanding than our schools can give him of what true patriotism means.

Chesterton believed in liberty, and was ready to go to the mat for it on any terms and at any hour of the day or night. He did not care for the kind of liberty that is parcelled out by a crew of political rogues and mountebanks, and marked "good for this day and train only." He was for the genuine old-fashioned simon-pure British "liberty of the subject"; and that idea leads me to consider something now going on in England which I have long wanted to bring to my readers'

attention. In so doing I know I am straying somewhat off my job, for what I say will not be, as heretofore, the review of a single book. In essence, however, it will be the review of a good many books or booklets, because it is a review of the organization which produces them.

II

THAT organization is the Society of Individualists; its headquarters are at 154 Fleet St., London, E.C. 4. Its president is Sir Ernest Benn. Names of its eighteen vice-presidents and the eighty members of its national council are among the most distinguished that England can show. I wish I had space to reproduce the list; I have seldom seen one so impressive. Three months ago a sister organization, the Society of Individualists of Scotland, was formed under the presidency of the Lord Provost of Edinburgh; and affiliated groups—branches—are forming all over the United Kingdom. The Society, in short, is a going concern, influential, powerful, energetic, effective.

The activities of the Society are the usual thing, in the main; public meetings, speeches, discussions, debates, press-releases, and the like. The one which I wish particularly to dwell on is its publishing. At irregular intervals the Society gets out a pamphlet in its series called *Post-war Questions*. It now has a list of twenty-five of these, the Society being only about two years old. It does not give these pamphlets away; the price is sixpence each, twelve cents. In this country the cost of production would bring the retail price of such work up to twice that, probably. Each of the Society's pamphlets runs to something like eight or ten thousand words, well-written, well-printed in clear type. Each is authoritative, written by somebody who knows his case and knows how to state it. Each one is either an exposition of some particular tenet of the individualist philosophy, or else it applies that philosophy to some particular turn of British public affairs.

I have followed the Society's work pretty closely for about a year and a half. What first attracted me was that the Society has one objective and only one. I knew of various organizations here—the country is crawling with them—which put out prospectuses advertising anywhere from two to half-a-dozen objectives, and I was not interested. Any one who ever handled a shotgun knows that if you shoot into a flock of quail you are lucky if you get a feather. You

have to pick your bird; and here was an organization that, believe me, had picked its bird.

The Society took its stand, and took it avowedly, explicitly, on the doctrine of individualism as laid down by Herbert Spencer in *The Man vs. the State*. Nothing else; that was all, there wasn't any more, and it was so stated on their literature. The English Individualists knew just what "the liberty of the subject" is, and also knew what it isn't, and not for a minute could anybody fool them about it with weasel words. They were out for liberty only, and anything else could wait. They wanted nothing but liberty and they meant to get liberty, by God, if somebody had to be carried out on a shutter.

I could understand that sort of talk from that sort of people, and fed up to my back teeth as I was with the puling, puking, Miss-Nancyish drivel about liberty which I had been hearing on this side of the Atlantic, it did me a world of good. There I caught the spirit that animated Chesterton and all the good old tough-minded boys who throughout English history have been like him, and have got results. That same spirit animates the Society's firm, dignified, forcible, uncompromising and extremely able publications—publications which, in addition to their own intrinsic merit, have the further merit of keeping open the market for the great standard literature of individualism. The way the Society keeps England's iniquitous jobholders sizzling on the gridiron, war-time or no war-time, would amaze an American accustomed to feeble footling journalistic humbug about "impeding the war-effort." During the last war G. B. Shaw wrote Chesterton that "unless you keep up as hot a fire from your ink-bottle on the government as the soldier keeps up from the trenches, you are betraying that soldier." Exactly so. The English Individualists jolly well know that the coercive bureaucratic State is the people's most inveterate and deadly enemy, and they act accordingly. I am no "joiner." I belong to no organization and wish to belong to none. As Mr. Jefferson said, "If I could not go to Heaven but with a party, I would not go there at all." Yet when I read the Society's prospectus I was almost sorry I did not have enough English blood to qualify me for being the first *Freiwilliger*; and now I am again almost sorry, for a different reason.

For if I were English, I should not have before me at this moment a pleasant letter from the Society's secretary which I can't answer properly without considerable pain and mortification. He asks "if you would very kindly let me

have news from time to time of the similar activities" here. As far as I know, there are none. This is supposed to be the sweet land of liberty, but where is the powerful organization committed to liberty, *nothing but liberty*, nothing short of liberty, and bearing as many as eighty of the country's most distinguished names on the roster of its general council? I know of none. This is supposed to be the home of rugged individualism, but who and where are those who understand individualism's philosophy and are able to expound it with any kind of competence? I know perhaps of six, all scattered, unknown to one another, inarticulate, ineffectual, stifled by the propaganda of collectivism. Where is the continuous stream of able, timely, well-informed, well-printed, authentic individualist literature, made available at twenty-five cents a throw? I have not seen a trickle of it. Where is the great standard literature of nineteenth-century individualism? I don't see it in our book-shops. At the time of Shays' Rebellion Mr. Jefferson wrote, "The spirit of resistance to government is so valuable that I wish it always to be kept alive." I see no sign of it. I see some spirit of resistance to the New Deal, which is first-rate as far as it goes, but I see none of the sound individualism which is always ready instantly to set fire to *any* government that violates "the liberty of the subject" by a hair's breadth, whether that government be New Deal, Old Deal, Square Deal, G.O.P. Republican, red-licker Democrat, or hard-cider Prohibitionist.

So it would seem that answering the secretary's courteous letter will be rather up-hill work. I suppose the only thing is to make a clean breast of the situation. I sometimes wonder why our representative men, especially those in the world of business, are so unwilling to examine individualism and see what is in it. Probably it is because they have no tradition of the kind, as the English have. Still, they are learning from bitter experience how the philosophy of collectivism works out, and one would suppose that this might make them more accessible to a different set of ideas. Like the British Liberals, they have always been in favor of giving the State power after power to do things *for* them, and now they discover that each of these increments of power carried an exactly equivalent power to do things *to* them, and that this process has culminated in the erection of a coercive collectivist State.

Under these circumstances it would be no waste of time to find out what individualism has to say for itself, and I do not know of any better

way to do that than by studying its literature. Unfortunately America has produced very little of such literature; the standard works are chiefly of British origin. At present it is producing virtually none. I am not sure that a series of treatises (for that is what the Society's pamphlets amount to) of as good quality as the Society's could be produced here, though they might be. But if American individualists, provided there be any, want a literature specifically directed towards their own country's circumstances, they must manufacture it themselves; a borrowed literature, naturally, will not fill the bill. The Society's pamphlets, excellent as they are, would not answer American purposes any better than ours would answer theirs. They do, however, afford a model of what I believe is the most effective means of promoting both interest and instruction in individualism's philosophy, at the present time.

III

NOW, after this long digression which Mrs. Ward's book started, I go back to the conventional type of book review in order to introduce *The Menace of the Herd*, by Francis Stuart Campbell. This is another book of Roman Catholic parentage, so I bring it in here as congenial company for Mrs. Ward's. It is published under Catholic auspices, as one of the Science and Culture Series, of which Dr. Joseph Husslein, S.J., is the general editor. I can assure the reader that its value is the same for a person of any religion or of none.

The title quite completely accounts for the book. Mr. Campbell presents an extremely able study of the herd-instinct, its over-development in modern society, and the appalling aberrations which that over-development has brought about; not only in a society which is avowedly collectivist, as in Russia or Germany, but in one like ours which keeps up the strange and interesting pretension of "democracy,"—interesting because, as the author shows, it is so preposterously untenable.

It is hardly necessary to say that the book exhibits a fine and sound scholarship, for the fact of its having passed muster under Jesuit editing is a guarantee of that. The notes alone establish it as an invaluable work of reference, to be jealously kept handy and never lent to anybody under any circumstances. At the same time, the book is highly readable. Its style is unpretentious, plain, easy, and the subject-matter is pre-

sented in a way to hold one's attention with no strain or lapse of interest.

The most intimate portion of the book, naturally, is its chapter on England, and the following chapter on The American Scene. Its analysis is excellent, its inferences plausible, and its conclusions sound. There can be no doubt that the tendencies which this author observes in American society have long been leading up to a passive bovine acceptance of the coercive collectivism which now prevails here. America has given once more a conspicuous proof and example of how invariably an assiduous cultivation of the herd-instinct,—in other words, how the keeping-up of a "democracy" which is purely nominal and fictitious,—how invariably this causes the pseudo democracy to slide off easily and naturally into totalitarian collectivism.

And so America has proven that the menace of the herd is a menace to intellect and culture, to religion and morals, to beauty and poetry, to social life and manners; in short, to all that makes existence interesting and happy. But immeasurably beyond and above all this, it is a menace to the dignity of the individual. It threatens to make the person no longer a person,—and here we come back to Chesterton and the Society of Individualists. I doubt that these men see anything in post-war collectivism so revolting as the intolerable indignity of English men and women becoming a race of point-rationed, stamp-licking, form-filling, coupon-snipping puppets.

Mr. Campbell's book is for minds that are clear, logical, and above all are minds wholly free from petty prejudice, *disinterested* minds. The true individualist has this type of mind. With perfect objectivity Chesterton would read, study and treasure anything that was up his street, whether it came from Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Turks, infidels or heretics. There are none too many such minds anywhere, but there must be a few somewhere in America. I wish I might induce them to read Mr. Campbell's first twelve pages, in which he makes his superb, his definitive, analysis of the word which is floating on the surface of everybody's vocabulary,—*democracy*. If they did this, they would read the rest of the book, then re-read it, and then keep it at their elbows forever after.

Gilbert Keith Chesterton. By Maisie Ward. Sheed and Ward, New York. 704 pp. \$4.50.

The Menace of the Herd. By Francis Stuart Campbell. Bruce Publishing Co., Milwaukee. 398 pp. \$4.00.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, *Editor*

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IN *The Republic* the able pen of Mr. Charles A. Beard has produced the most useful work on American Constitutional history that I have ever seen, and also the most attractive. Mr. Beard, I believe, has more detailed knowledge of his subject than any one now living; and notwithstanding his many years as a university professor, he also knows how to write clear, correct, idiomatic English, such as is an enduring pleasure to read. I urge my readers to get possession of this book by any means, even by theft if necessary, as long as they keep their hands off my copy; and then to study it diligently, going over it time and time again, and turning to it whenever any public question referable to it comes up.

The work is a treatise on the Constitution, the fundamental law of the land. Its distinction lies in approaching and examining the Constitution by the light of history only—no theory, no notions about what this-or-that might be or ought to be, but simply cold, hard historical fact. This sounds like dry reading, but over and above knowing how to write, Mr. Beard knows how a book should be built. He understands literary architectonics. Any bookseller would be perfectly safe in telling a customer that if he found this book dry or uninteresting he could have his money back.

Mr. Beard has cast his book in the form of a series of dialogues. A couple of friends agree to meet with him once a week, and discuss a specified subject pertaining to the Constitution. Occasionally an interested visitor drops in and takes part. In these discussions Mr. Beard presents himself strictly as a person with a monumental lot of information, but no axe to grind. Sometimes, not often, he lets out an opinion, but

always carefully safeguards it as such. You don't have to take it. Each discussion is held down firmly to the one subject as it appears in the historical course of the Constitution, never as it is in the abstract. For instance, freedom of speech, viewed in the abstract, is a very interesting thing to talk about, but Mr. Beard's group do not stray off into that. They confine their discussions closely to the view of free speech which actually appears in Constitutional history.

The first discussion deals with the opening words of the Preamble: "We, the People." What people? Who are they? To most of us this chapter is a continuous revelation of what we don't know. The second one is on the question: What is the Constitution? From this the discussions go on in logical order: Democracy and Rights under the Constitution; Washington and Jefferson as Constitutionalists; Lincoln's position; Union and Justice under the Constitution; the provisions for insuring domestic peace and for common defense; and so on through discussions on the "general welfare" clause, on liberty, citizens' rights, the several powers of Congress, the Executive and the Judiciary, the party system, and the Constitutional position of our republic in the world of nations. In view of our existing circumstances this last chapter is perhaps the most interesting of all, especially for the light it throws on the vexatious matter of isolationism. The book ends with a chapter which is unrelated, strictly speaking, and might well have been left off. It is speculative, tacked on "by way of salvo," as Rabelais says of Panurge's ending to his colloquy with Goatsnose. In substance, it is Mr. Beard's best guess at the Republic's future; and for all we know, his guess may be as good as any.

Now, just what is it that the reader will get out of this book to justify me in almost forcing it down his throat? First, *information*. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land, and there is very little of it, only some eighteen printed pages. Few Americans know it, fewer still know anything about the history of its progress from its adoption down to the present time. There are few pages in this book which do not show some piece of apposite information that only ten Americans in a million, probably, ever heard of; and the reader gets this information in the most pleasant and easy way, through simple dialogue.

But after all, information is fairly easy to get if one looks for it. What is hard to get from treatises on Constitutional history is *light*; light, which enables us to see things as they are. Here, I believe, Mr. Beard's work stands alone. It takes its title from Plato, and for two thousand years most people have approached Plato for the wrong thing. In the *Laws* and the *Republic* they have looked for the description of a fixed, hard-and-fast, detailed civil system, and it simply isn't there, and can't be there. Here is the final word on Plato—I must quote it at full length—written by the great French moralist, Joseph Joubert:

Plato shows us nothing, but he brings brightness with him. He puts light into our eyes, and fills us with a clearness by which all objects afterwards become illuminated. He teaches us nothing; but he prepares us, fashions us, and makes us ready to know all. Somehow or other, the habit of reading him augments in us the capacity for discerning and entertaining whatever fine truths may afterwards present themselves.

Mr. Beard often seems to talk vaguely, inconsistently, much after the fashion of Gammer Yeaby-nay, or Rabelais' ephectic philosopher Trouillogan. So does Plato. The superficial mind of his friends, the so-called practical mind, habitually in search of an inflexible detailed system of rules, weights and measures, finds Mr. Beard unsatisfactory and loses patience. But these friends soon discover that he can't talk any other way, any more than Plato could, because he sees things as they are, and his subject won't let him. Sometimes his guests go home feeling as Mr. Dooley did, that "th' Constitution is applicable on'y in such cases as it is applied to on account iv its applicability," but they never fail to see clearly that the Constitution itself, and not Mr. Beard, is distinctly responsible for this. In the given instance, the Constitution was made that way; and in making it so the makers of it had an

idea in their heads that in the long course of history has turned out to be pretty fairly sound.

So the main thing the reader gets from this book is what he gets from Plato—light. In order to see things, not as you think they are or as you wish or hope they may be, but as they actually are, you must have light. Mr. Beard's guests learned many things about the Constitution which they did not know, and this was all to the good; but their great and permanent benefit was that the discussions "put light into their eyes, and filled them with a brightness by which all objects afterwards became illuminated." Their true gain, their substantial gain, was an increased flexibility of spirit, lucidity of mind, largeness of temper; and it is precisely this incalculable gain that accrues from commerce with Plato.

Mr. Beard lets drop one remark that deserves great attention. He says in effect that all the Constitution needs is a good old-fashioned spring housecleaning. Hoe out all the usurpative lumber which various Congressional and Executive acts have piled up on it, and we could rub along first-rate with the old machine just as it stands, and wouldn't need a new one. That idea is worth thinking about. I should like to see it pushed even further. Instead of courting the perils of a Constitutional Convention, why not first try clearing the ground for a fresh start by the simple method of repeal? If we made a clean sweep of all the Amendments following the Tenth, and voided most of the judge-made Constitutional law beginning with John Marshall's decisions, we would be in perfectly good shape to re-codify our national experience as far as necessary, at the same time keeping the old instrument as a sheet-anchor to windward. Experience may have shown us that we don't need quite so much judge-made law; that a good many troubles straighten themselves out if only you are patient enough to let things have a chance to happen; and that Amendments to regulate the price of hay or the length of shirt-tails aren't really necessary.

Mr. Beard's remark throws a bright light on the fact that in all their zeal for reform, Americans have never seen how much sound reform could be effected by the simple process of repeal. The early English Whigs understood this. If I remember correctly, they began business by clearing away about a thousand Acts, some oppressive and some outmoded. It was the later Liberals who had all the Americans' nervous horror of seeing a blank page on the statute-book. If individualism were a going concern in America as it

is in England, some real horse-doctor at American history would now be getting out a rousing treatise on *Reform by Repeal*. It might perhaps be a little off the line of Mr. Beard's interest at the present time; but what a job he would make of it if he took the notion to set himself at it!

II

WE now have another volume in the series which Mr. van Loon is producing, primarily for children. The readers will remember that his first one was on Mr. Jefferson. The present one is on *The Life and Times of Simon Bolivar*. In behalf of these books I should like to enter a plea with those of my readers who have children. The purpose of this series is to give children some idea of individual liberty, so that when they grow up they will resent being pushed around and sat upon by political jobholders of any and all descriptions, kings, princes, presidents, or whatever they may be called. If parents will think of the matter for a moment, they will see that unless their children get this idea at home they will not get it at all, for the school, college, church, newspaper, radio-orator, all combine in teaching them to the contrary. So parents will do well to go over these books diligently with their children, explain the idea to them, and help make the story of political liberty as attractive and interesting as possible.

Every period invites children to accept its own made-to-order heroes, built up out of the rags and wind of political interest by all kinds of disreputable press-agentry; and when history has got in its deadly work on those heroes, do they stink! What a choice job-lot of them we have seen in the America of our own day, and what a sweet-scented assortment are likely to emerge from the conquering nations when this war is over! Never mind the generation of French and English cubs who worshipped Napoleon and Cromwell. Most of us remember when French brats idolized Clemenceau, Polish children looked up to Pilsudski, Italians to Mussolini, Hungarians to Horthy, and when all Europe's children bowed down before Woodrow Wilson. I clearly remember the time when American children saw as bright a halo around Theodore Roosevelt's head as the one that no doubt thousands of our own youngsters—God help them!—are now seeing around his cousin Franklin's.

I don't like children or young people, and I can't wax sentimental over them, but I do like

to see them get fair play. This business of putting up synthetic plaster-of-Paris heroes for them to worship is outrageously unfair. The poor little devils naturally love heroes and are perfectly disinterested about it—they have no axe to grind. Why, then, in common decency, shouldn't we once in a while give them a chance at one or two who aren't cotton-backed and whose color won't come out in the wash?

That is how Mr. van Loon seems to feel about it, and so he gives them here the story of the great liberator of South America. Another reason why parents would do well to go over this book with their children is that they will learn some interesting things about South American history which most of us do not know. I was unaware that South America produced three George Washingtons while we were producing one, and that a pretty fair understudy for our own great Jefferson existed there at the same time. So, too, I never dreamed that the operations of Bolivar and San Martin covered more than three times the territory covered by Washington's. It is a fair assumption that on many such points of history most of us are as ignorant as I was, or as Mr. van Loon says he was until he began looking up his subject.

Mr. van Loon is continuing his series. I hope he will not be too modest to consider giving our children a study of one of his own country's heroes, a great character, one of the greatest in history, William the Taciturn. If we could rear a couple of generations of whelps in William's spirit, American society might stand a chance of becoming, in time, a pretty creditable piece of work.

III

AND now while we are thinking about our children, another Hollander, (but this time only by descent, I believe,) Mr. Mark van Doren, comes forward with an excellent book, *Liberal Education*. Excellent as the book is, however, I am in rather a quandary about recommending it. Giving it a general recommendation, especially to a select body of readers like mine, would be like recommending Escoffier's cook-book to housekeepers when there is nothing in the market but side-meat and corn-meal. Escoffier gives you such delightful reading that your mouth waters, and he shows you exactly how things ought to be done, but if you can't get the stuff, a reviewer could hardly give him an unqualified recommendation.

I am sure that Mr. van Doren would be the

last to misunderstand me. My point is that you may know just what a liberal education is, and know just what to do with one when you get it, but you can't find it in our institutions. I believe that you can still corkscrew one out of the institutions managed by the Jesuits, but I am speaking on the strength of past performances and must therefore speak under correction; still, I think it is highly probable. The one sure thing is that a liberal education is not to be had elsewhere. Qualified critics have been saying for years that our State-controlled system of popular instruction, the most expensive and pretentious in the world, is a gigantic failure, a resounding flop. They have repeatedly shown cause why it is so, and must be so; and now, in face of developments due to the war, one can scarcely imagine any one having the hardihood to maintain the contrary.

Nevertheless there is something to be said for Mr. van Doren's book. If you want to know what a liberal education is, simply as a matter of public interest, buy it. In the main, Mr. van Doren's ideas are sound and good, and he writes with engaging force and enthusiasm, as well as with consummate fairness and generosity towards the few who might be inclined to reluct a little at the validity of one or two of his postulates.

In view of this purpose, then, his book is superb, and I can't overpraise it. Superb and beyond praise it is also for another and more important purpose. Let it pass for the moment that your child can't find a liberal education anywhere in the country's institutional life. But he can get a start towards one, and (if he be the right sort) the *disposition* towards one, at home. Practically from birth, by one means and another, mainly by force of example, he can get a good working sense of the fourth great R—Reason. For the sake of this you can even afford to take a little stress off the other three Rs, if need be. Mainly again by example, almost from birth he can come into a formative liking for the high and fine qualities of mind and spirit, the truly aristocratic temper and frame of being, which is the best fruit of a liberal education.

Mr. van Doren's book is replete with these

qualities. It not only shows what they are, but shows that the beginnings of them are broadly communicable even to a child in arms. For the information of the right sort of parent, therefore, and still more, infinitely more, for his encouragement, nothing could be better; and so it turns out that I can say a good deal for Mr. van Doren's work, after all.

IV

FROM education to journalism is a long jump, but I want to drop in a word for Mr. Selden Menefee's *Assignment, U. S. A.* It is a report on "the state of the Union," as seen at 84 points on his 14,000-mile journey through 41 states. Mr. Menefee writes in a good professional style, and has done an uncommonly good professional job.

Since it deals with an ever-changing scene, the book is ephemeral. The reader will also know how to make due allowances on matters of opinion. For example, Mr. Menefee always gives the Administration the best of it whenever he can, and Congress the worst, which is understandable, and the reader may take it as he likes; as also, among other things, he may use his own judgment about Mr. Menefee's extensive reliance on Gallup polls, which on matters of opinion are notoriously worthless. The book's real value is in its odds-and-ends of local information. These are so remarkably abundant, so interesting and so well presented, that they make the book worth any one's casual reading. After one has read it, one would probably lay it aside for good; but it is well worth a reading.

The Republic. By Charles A. Beard. The Viking Press, New York. 365 pp. \$3.00.

The Life and Times of Simon Bolivar. By Hendrik Willem van Loon. Dodd, Mead and Co., New York. 146 pp. \$2.50.

Liberal Education. By Mark van Doren. Henry Holt and Co., New York. 186 pp. \$2.50.

Assignment, U. S. A. By Selden Menefee. Reynal and Hitchcock, New York. 301 pp. \$3.00.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, Editor

Vol. 1, No. 9

February 1, 1944

THE momentous Beveridge Report has been before the American public for something more than a year. It was brought out here by the Macmillan Company almost simultaneously with its release in England, and its sale has run to thirty or forty thousand copies. It is an impressive document, comprising exactly three hundred pages of small type and uncommonly close printing, coming to a round total of about 110,000 words. It represents the *ne plus ultra* in bureaucratic State "planning." Beside it, all other attempts of the kind look fragmentary and amateurish; and for scope, finish, particularity, and completeness of organization, we shall wait a long time before we see its equal. As a kind of primer or companion-volume, the Macmillan Company has now put out *The Pillars of Security*, made up of essays and addresses by Sir William Beveridge, largely explanatory of the Report and dealing with various criticisms which the Report has received.

Insofar as Sir William's work bears on British conditions alone and British interests alone, no American has a right to speak. I understand that the British Parliament has already accepted some of the main principles of the Report, and some of its parts in detail. Any comment or criticism on this would be a gross impertinence. Whether or not Sir William knows what he is about, whether or not the Parliament knows what it is about, neither the Parliament nor Sir William is properly answerable to American opinion. But Sir William's work, in its main features, has a bearing, distinct though indirect, upon American conditions and interests, and to that extent Americans are within their rights in saying what they think of

it. Sir William Beveridge's word has a great deal of weight with some of our officials in Washington, and with a highly vocal section of our public. Insofar, therefore, as the Report affects the progress of collectivist thought and activity in America, and insofar as Sir William's authority is used by our bureaucratic "planners" to sanction their aims and ambitions, they are perfectly proper subjects for American discussion.

For instance, the title of the Report is *Social Insurance and Allied Services*. Our collectivist bureaucrats use the word *insurance* in the same way, and they can plausibly cite Sir William's authority for so doing. Terms like "unemployment-insurance" are official at Washington. Now, whatever may be the case in England, in this country such use of the term *insurance* is so special as to be misleading, and in my opinion it is fraudulent;—that is to say, deliberately designed to give a false impression. In this country the business of insurance is bottomed on the presumption that the insured person will do everything he can to avoid making a claim. If he insures his life, it is on the presumption that he wants to live as long as he can and will take all due measures towards doing so. Accident-insurance presumes that he does not want to get hurt and will do his best not to be hurt, and so on. But does social insurance, or indeed the whole structure of "social security," rest on any such presumption? It may in England—I have no opinion to offer about that—but in this country it most certainly does not, and even the most superficial examination of our experiments in that line will show conclusively that it does not.

Again, the Report states that the system of so-

cial insurance contemplates "a Social Insurance Fund built up by contributions from the insured persons, from their employers, if any, and from the State." All the principal cash payments are to be paid from this fund. As we know, the American system contemplates a similar fund, built up in the same way. At the present time, employed persons have their wages docked of a certain percentage as a forced contribution to this fund, and a forced contribution is levied against employers. All this goes under the name of a "social security tax," and seems to accord precisely with what Sir William Beveridge has in mind. When these levies are all over and done with, the balance of money needed to fill out the fund will be supplied by proportionate contributions from the State.

I have no idea of what the British State's independent resources may be, and I am glad to take Sir William's word for anything he may say or imply about them. As far as I know, the British State may be as rich as Croesus; I hope it is. I do know, however, that the American State has not so much as one single brass farthing to contribute to anything or anybody; and I believe moreover that any pretence to the contrary, by whomsoever made, is sheer deliberate fraud. The American State has no money of its own, not one red cent. "Government money," of which we used to hear so much in the palmy days of pump-priming, has no existence and never had. All the money the American State has is what it extorts from its people by taxation. The State produces nothing; it lives by levying on the production of its citizens—a purely parasitic existence. Take away its taxing-power, and it would die overnight.

So what the American system of social insurance comes to is exactly this: The insured person pays his own share outright; he pays the employer's share in the enhanced price of the commodities he buys; and he pays the State's share in taxation. He pays the whole bill. This seems to me distinctly something for the insured person, especially the small-wage earner and the medium-wage earner, to look into. If he also considers the system's administrative cost, the amount of bureaucratic brokerage involved, he will probably conclude that his compulsory social insurance is not only the most dishonest but also the most expensive form of insurance that could be put in practice without sending its promoters to jail. If he cares for my opinion, I am free to say—entirely without prejudice to Sir William Beveridge or his Report—that I believe the American system of State-managed social insurance is the most

despicable fraud and biggest humbug that has been foisted on the country's wage-earners, especially the poorer ones among them, since the enterprise of the lamented Ponzi.

The Report says nothing about the political aspect of social insurance; nothing directly, that is, though it suggests a good deal. Sir William seems to have no doubt that the State is the best available agency, in fact the only fit agency, for carrying out a general scheme of social improvement. It is true that in *The Man vs. the State*, Herbert Spencer filed a vigorous dissenting opinion against this idea, and backed it up with a mass of evidence that remains irrefragable to this day. All those who have tried to bite that file have merely broken their teeth. But Spencer wrote in 1884, and perhaps the British State has entirely changed its character since then. In any case it would be improper to dwell on Sir William's view beyond remarking its exact coincidence with the view held by our own collectivists both within and without our government.

The whole history of the American State goes to show that, so far from being the best available agency for any such large purpose, it is the worst. Our Socialists used to point with pride to the Postoffice as an example of efficient State monopoly, until it was called to their attention that the State merely sorts and distributes mail; private enterprise carries it, and has always done so. Furthermore John Wanamaker, who was no slouch as a businessman and who served a term as Postmaster-General, said he could work the Postoffice as a private enterprise at an annual saving of two million dollars, give a great deal better service, and make a very decent profit.

There is no use in multiplying examples of our invariable experience to show that in order to assure ourselves of getting the most costly, wasteful, inefficient and corrupt management of any enterprise, we have only to turn it over to the State; and the larger the enterprise, naturally, the more flagrant and excessive are these misdoings sure to be. The reason is known to everyone; it is simply that the State, having the taxing-power, is under no pressure whatever to be efficient, economical, careful or honest. It can do as it pleases; which means, it can do as its bureaucrats please, without risk of their being promptly and seriously called to account, as officials of a private corporation would be. For instance, in this very matter of social insurance as it stands today, what would be thought of a private corporation's spending the money paid by its employees into a retirement-fund, instead of investing

sider rather carefully whether in the long run the plan will yield a more substantial profit to the nation or to the jobholders.

There is even more to it than that. Every day some one asks how long the war will last, and no one can answer. It seems as nearly certain as anything can be, however, that by one means or another the war will be kept going until all the populations concerned have become fully adjusted to a slave-economy. Now, in contrast to a free economy, a slave-economy must be totalitarian, collectivist, bureaucratic; otherwise, obviously, it will not work at all. Its administration must be most carefully planned to the smallest detail, and its plans most rigorously made effectual; otherwise it will not work well. This is equally true, whether the slave-economy is in force over the relatively small area of a Southern plantation, or over an area as large and populous as Russia. I repeat that an American can say nothing about the applicability of Sir William Beveridge's findings to conditions in post-war Britain. But an American can say one thing in praise of Sir William's merits, and say it whole-heartedly. Beyond any reasonable doubt, his Report would provide the most nearly perfect pattern and the most complete specifications that could be devised for the administration of a post-war slave-economy in the United States.

The citizen who regards the whole movement for "social security" with deep suspicion has two courses open before him. I do not undertake to say which of the two is the better one for him to follow, because I do not know. He can try to head the movement off and quash it by political methods,—agitation, organization, voting. There is a good deal to be said for this; it is our regular time-honored method. The most that can be said against it is that the citizen so seldom gets what he agitates, organizes, and votes for, even though he may be assured of it by the most effusive promises. Our experiences in the last twelve years have reminded us forcibly that the moral integrity of the jobseeker is not to be implicitly relied on. Nevertheless, the method always does some good, and even does sometimes succeed, so therefore presumably it may always be worth trying.

The other method is that of letting the movement run unchecked until corruption rots it down to an ill-smelling end. There is something in the old maxim that the best way to get rid of a bad law is to enforce it. One advantage of this method of non-resistance is that it does away with the vicious evils of compromise, and is therefore thorough-going. We employed it against the maniacal movement for Prohibition, and there is no likelihood of that issue's ever troubling us again.

Its main disadvantage is that it is very expensive. The moral tone of American society has never yet recovered itself completely from our bout with Prohibition, and letting our bureaucracy have a free hand at administering a slave-economy would unquestionably depress it to an appalling level. Still, it would no doubt rise in course of time, and certainly we would be through with State-manipulated social security for good and all. I once knew a middle-aged man who had pickled himself with whisky and tobacco for years, and then gone into a terrific run of confluent small-pox. It was touch-and-go with him for weeks, but finally when he was right down to the turn an iron constitution did barely pull him through by the skin of his teeth. He was long convalescing; and it was then discovered that the disease had scoured his system as clean as a newborn child's. He never drank whisky or used tobacco again; his desire for them had vanished; and he lived into a decent, wholesome, and happy old age.

The cure was expensive; no doubt of that. It was also very dangerous; no doubt of that, either. But it was also a real cure, complete and perfect, leaving nothing ever to be done over again.

Social Insurance and Allied Services: The Beveridge Report. The Macmillan Company, New York. 300 pp. \$1.00.

The Pillars of Security. By Sir William H. Beveridge. The Macmillan Company, New York. 241 pp. \$2.50.

The Man vs. the State. By Herbert Spencer. The Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho. 213 pp. \$2.00.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, Editor

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ONE of the most astonishing things, and certainly one of the most encouraging, that has happened to me in twenty years, was the sight of a paper-bound volume just now brought out by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, entitled *Do We Want Free Enterprise?*

The economics of the book were not particularly new or strange to me. To any old-line radical of the last century they would be old hat. What encouraged me was that an American Chamber of Commerce should now be promoting two brand-new and thoroughly sound ideas as basic to its work; and what astonished me was that any group of American businessmen should stand for them. Until this book appeared I would have bet my last penny that no such thing was possible; and even now, if I followed my impulse, I would start for Los Angeles tomorrow in order to look at those businessmen and feel of them and satisfy myself that they actually exist.

The book begins with an anecdote. One newspaperman said to another, "If I ever found a businessman who didn't want free enterprise, I'd drop dead." The other replied, "I'd drop dead if I ever found one who did want it." The point of the anecdote is that neither of these journalists had ever found a businessman who knew what free enterprise is.

A year ago the Los Angeles Chamber seems to have grasped this idea, and decided that something ought to be done about it. How can you tell whether or not you want a thing, if you don't know what it is? "Free enterprise" was a term in every businessman's mouth. Every businessman wanted free enterprise. But when you stood

him up on the carpet with "What d'ya mean, free enterprise?" it turned out that he had no notion of what he was talking about, and his words might mean anything or nothing.

This was not good enough for the Chamber of Commerce people, so they did the simple and sensible thing. They went back to school. They got in Dr. V. O. Watts to lecture to them during the noon hour every day for a month or so, on what free enterprise is and what it isn't; what its risks and responsibilities are; and what political and economic conditions are required to establish it and keep it going. This book I speak of is a syllabus of his lectures.

I shall not dissect the book. What I wish to bear down on is the two ideas that gave birth to it. The first is the one that we radicals learned under the tough schoolmastering of teachers like John Adams, Mill, Gumpowicz, Henry George, Herbert Spencer. *Define your terms, then follow through on them.* If we learned nothing else we learned that, and learned it for keeps. The consequence was that when the collectivist of those days went up against the radical, he got back every cent of change that was coming to him. There is now a most pressing need of this lesson for those who can take it, for political charlatans and scoundrels, not content with debauching our finances, are busy day and night with the far worse crime of debauching our ideas. It is ten to one that in the next four months every pliant jobseeker on the list will pose as the eternal loving friend of free enterprise "under proper regulation" or "under State supervision." A member of the Administration told one of my friends the other day that hereafter we are going to have free enterprise "within the framework of

the State." Just think of an ignorant little nincompoop like that!

Now for the second basic idea. These Californians say they are always meeting the question, "How will you get the principle of free enterprise over to the masses?" They reply simply: "We won't. Not our job. We are not missionaries, we are businessmen. Our job is to get it over to ourselves." This is amazing! What is it out there in Los Angeles that makes a group of businessmen coolly turn their backs on America's most sacred tradition? Is it the climate? Is it the fruits and flowers? Is it the horrible example of Hollywood, their next-door neighbor? Whenever an American gets a notion in his head, the first thing he is supposed to think of is how to reach the masses with it. Mass-production, mass-education, mass-culture, mass-religion, mass-science, art, music, literature, mass-everything,—why, that is America, it has always been America. Yet here is a body of men who say in effect: "Reaching the masses be damned! If every *one* businessman will give *one* businessman—that is, give himself,—a good thorough training on the nature and significance of free enterprise, he will have done his stuff and needn't bother his head about reaching the masses."

So all honor to the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce for tackling a great subject in the right spirit and getting at it in precisely the right way! In days to come no doubt some fundamental economist (as distinguished from an academic or college-trained economist) may say that Dr. Watts has not quite cleared the subject up, and may point out a few spots that would stand a bit of scrubbing. In the matter of the book's title, for instance, the Chamber's great-great-grandchildren will probably have discovered that free enterprise is a far different thing from private enterprise,—very far indeed,—and that what their ancestors were talking about was really not free enterprise at all, but private enterprise. But never mind about all that. Something must always be left for posterity to do, or what's the use of having any posterity? The thing to be remarked is that the Chamber has taken the right attitude, shown the right spirit, done a first-class job, and set a brilliant example to businessmen throughout the country.

I suggest that this example be followed. I suggest specifically that some group of businessmen should do for the great kindred doctrine of individualism exactly what the Los Angeles Chamber has done for the doctrine of free enterprise. I suggest this here and now because free enterprise has its tap-root in individualism; or in other

words, the doctrine of free enterprise is a specific application of the general principles of individualism, somewhat as hydraulic engineering is bottomed on the general principles of physics. Therefore in the order of importance the study of individualism would obviously come first.

I have spoken of this before, in connection with the work of the English Society of Individualists, and I believe now that I can count on the moral support of many intelligent persons in speaking of it again. For what is the actual issue dividing the country today? I do not mean electioneering issues such as "isolationism"; those are birdlime strewn out for political purposes. Communism, New Dealism, Nazism, Fascism, are all mere trade-names covering the same kind of trumpery. The actual question before the citizen now is: Do we want a regime of individualism or a regime of collectivist Statism? By this time most of us have a pretty fair idea of what collectivist Statism means in practice, at least; but as the Chamber found out with regard to free enterprise, precious few of us have the ghost of an idea of what individualism means.

I say again what I have often said, that in my opinion the main reason why the blight of collectivism has settled on us is that the collectivist always has known his stuff, and the people who called themselves individualists have never known enough even to know that they had any stuff. "Rugged individualism" has been made almost to stink in the public's nostrils for forty years. It is forty years of ignorance, dull impenetrable ignorance, that has exposed the honest and successful businessman of today to a jobholder's blackguardly sneers at "economic royalism" and "princes of privilege." It is ignorance that will keep him exposed to such displays of vulgar malice; for the record is clear that collectivism has never yet had a dog's chance with an individualist who really knew his stuff.

II

THE *Rediscovery of Man* is a treatise on practical psychology by Dr. Henry C. Link. It is not a manual of psychiatry, nor has it anything to do with any of the current systems or doctrines of psychoanalysis. It does not delve into any of the activities and problems of "the sub-conscious mind." This should be understood at the outset, because many sensible people instinctively associate the prefix *psycho* with some kind of fad or fraud, and fight shy of it. They may be right about this, or they may be wrong, but such is the fact. *Psychology* is the first word in Dr. Link's book; but if any-

one is put off by it, he is unjust to himself and will lose a great deal. I say this with some kind of authority, for no one could be more densely ignorant of psychology, whether practical or theoretical, than I am; so if I got a great deal of solid value out of this book, which I did, anybody can get as much, and many who are better informed than I am can get more.

What chiefly impresses an ignorant person like myself is the astonishing amount of common sense that pervades the book from end to end. In fact, if Dr. Link will permit me to say so, practical psychology, as he represents it, seems to me to have very little to it but plain horse sense. There is certainly nothing recondite about it. Its basic premises are facts which everybody knows, and the conclusions they support are those which a person of ordinary good sense would draw. Hence the book is unpretentious; the subject is neither written up to the highbrow nor down to the masses. It proceeds along the unbroken level of average knowledge and average good sense; and this, in my opinion, makes the book an achievement of unusual merit.

Dr. Link's first postulate is that nobody is born with a mind, but only with the capacity for making a mind. Well, we all know that. Second, the mind is made by habit. No doubt of that, either; we all know it. No child is born with the alphabet in his head, or the knowledge that two and two make four. He builds up this knowledge by habit, "the habit of saying *mama* and *daddy*, of counting from one to twenty, of reading and writing, of repeating the multiplication-table, and so on through childhood and adolescence. These habits, and thousands more acquired by practice, make a mind, and without them there is no mind. Without them there is no thinking, no reasoning; for they are the tools of reason."

Obviously so. So also with personality and character. No one is born with them ready-made. The development of each and all of the elements which go into them is a matter of habit. As Dr. Link points out, these conclusions in respect of habit are nothing new, nor are they peculiar to modern psychology. Both Aristotle and Plato set them forth explicitly and at length, twenty centuries ago. Furthermore, habit may be either good or bad with reference to the kind of mind or character they tend to produce. This also is a matter of common observation, common sense, and if one wants further authority for it, one can again fall back on Aristotle and Plato.

In view of all this, Dr. Link defines practical psychology as "essentially the scientific study of

habits and their formation; first, so that those habits may be better understood; second, so that they may be better controlled." Common sense commends this as clearly logical, reasonable, and in view of its final purpose of producing better mind and better character at large, it is admirable. The rest of the book may be summed up as an extremely interesting and informative exhibit of the progress which has so far been made with this scientific study of habit.

In the chapter on "Machinists of the Soul" the differentiations which set off practical psychology from psychiatry and psychoanalysis are stated effectively and, as well as a layman can judge, fairly. Perhaps the most important chapter, and certainly the most thought-provoking, is the second. It faces the great fact that while physical science has made immense contributions to man's control over his material environment, it has "added practically nothing to his control of his personal and social behavior." I do not see how common honesty can go through the soul-searching job of reading this chapter without giving unqualified assent to every word in it. Its pages show what personality and character have come to in consequence of "three hundred years of physical science and miseducation, the central theme of which is the concept of man as a helpless cog in a mechanistic universe." Once read, these pages can hardly be forgotten.

But really one should not try to balance one chapter of this admirable book against another in the scale of importance. It should be read through in an orderly and methodical way, and should be re-read many times. The reader will find in its pages a fundamental analysis of current social and political theory—communist, fascist, democratic. He will also find a most deservedly scathing analysis of liberalism. He will find the grounds on which psychology demands a revision of the relations between science and the Christian Church. He will see why it imperatively demands a return to the gold standard in thought and reason, in ethics, religion, social life and manners. Underlying and supporting these demands he will find the thing of which at this time he is most in need—a sound doctrine of individualism. For the psychologist, the unit of ultimate value is not the State, not society, but the individual; and it is only on the revived and strengthened personality of the individual that a substantial social structure can be built. Nothing could be better, nothing more reasonable, nothing more timely, than the book's strenuous insistence on this great truth.

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III

I HAVE here three or four books which I don't urge my readers to buy on general principles, but which deserve a word or two of notice. The one likely to meet the most widespread interest is *The Return of Opportunity*, for there is a good deal of speculation and questioning afoot about the chances in various fields of industrial and commercial enterprise after the war. The book is a symposium of opinions from leaders representing a hundred and fifty industries and professions. For its purpose it is no doubt the best thing of the kind yet published. In general, its outlook is hopeful and enthusiastic. In general also, the book is interesting, as such a variegated collection of expert opinion is almost sure to be, even when one looks at it with mere languid curiosity.

Then there is *The Seven Myths of Housing*, by Nathan Straus, former head of the U. S. Housing Authority. I am sure my readers have the same opinion of State housing that I have; the same opinion that we have of any other form of State enterprise. I mention this book only as the best defense of State enterprise in housing that I have seen. All I can say is that if you want to know the most that collectivist Statism can find to say for itself in this field of activity, there it is. Mr. Straus does not touch our insurmountable root-objections to State housing, so my readers can easily assess his representations for what they are worth, without any help from me. In his appendix Mr. Straus summarizes the British document called the Uthwatt Report, which the English Individualists have been satisfactorily dissecting. The Report runs to almost as many words as the Beveridge Report, and is of the same breed. Both are to be regarded as so-many chapters in a prospective general digest and charter of a slave-economy.

In *The American Senate and World Peace*, Prof. Colegrove shows anxiety about a possible upsetting of the peace-treaty by a fractious and reprehensible minority in the Senate. He regards the three-fourths rule as antiquated, and is for substituting a simple majority-rule. The book is sometimes amusing; here and there it suggests callowness, as when he gives the impression throughout that all recalcitrant Senators have been deceitful and desperately wicked, in contrast to those who have gone along. I don't stand up for jobholders, but it would be odd if villainy were not a little more evenly distributed among them than that. Again, Mr. Colegrove shows a rather juvenile exuberance over the memory of

John Hay, "America's most brilliant Secretary of State." If General MacArthur ever muses on the iniquitous connivances that inveigled us into the Spanish War, thus landing him in his present sweaty job, I would give a great deal more for his opinion of Mr. Hay's brilliance than I would for Mr. Colegrove's. If this book were better than it is I should still think it was hardly worth reading, for I have a strong suspicion that nothing Mr. Colegrove or any one else may write or say on this subject can at all influence the course of events.

My fourth book is *God's Englishman*, by another professor, Mr. Baldwin. It is agreeably written, is interesting, and contains a number of good things. For example, the effect of the English common law, as against that of Roman law, is better set off here than in any other treatise I know. The Englishman's virtues and failings, and the comparison with those of the Frenchman and the German, are an old story, rather musty. The Anglo-Saxon's one cardinal failing is not dwelt on—his inability to mold an interesting, an *amiable* civilization, one that has savor and depth. One often wonders how much of British social prestige is due to qualities of mind and character, and how much is due to the fact that the British have accumulated so much wealth and territory. One remembers the grovelling adulation that we used to bestow on our plug-ugly millionaires of the last century, who were actually most uninteresting and unamiable persons. The Anglo-Saxon, however, has unquestionably great virtues, and if one needs to be reminded of them, Mr. Baldwin will supply the need. Whether they are enough in themselves to insure permanence or even a reasonable stability for the kind of civilization which they are capable of shaping is perhaps not yet clearly apparent.

Do We Want Free Enterprise? By V. O. Watts.
Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. 170 pp.
\$.50; 10 copies \$3.50; 100 copies \$30.00.

The Rediscovery of Man. By Henry C. Link.
The Macmillan Company, New York. 257 pp.
\$1.75.

The Return of Opportunity: A Symposium. Harper and Bros., New York. 309 pp. \$3.00.

The Seven Myths of Housing. By Nathan Straus. A. A. Knopf, New York. 313 pp.
\$2.75.

The American Senate and World Peace. By Kenneth Colegrove. The Vanguard Press, New York. 209 pp. \$2.00.

God's Englishman. By Leland Dewitt Baldwin.
Little, Brown and Co., Boston. 265 pp. \$3.00.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, *Editor*

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MEN and brethren, what is the sense of mincing words about a plain fact? If you're stung, you're stung, and there is no use in pretending you are not. The thing is to own up like a man, and then see what can be done about it. People everywhere are saying they are afraid the American system of representative government will be destroyed. But it *has been* destroyed. It does not exist. They fear that our citizens will lose the liberties guaranteed them by the American Bill of Rights. But they *have* lost them. Right now, at this good moment, no citizen has even the ghost of a right that any mangy little bureaucrat in Washington is bound to respect, or that he will respect if he takes a notion to override it. If you doubt this, try it out on him and see what happens. People say they are afraid we are in for a planned economy. But we are not in for one, we have *got* one, and got it good and hard. If you don't believe this, try to set up a business, any kind of business, and count the hurdles you have to jump with some despicable petty bureaucrat-ringmaster cracking the whip over you. Brethren, if you have any common sense left, face the facts. Don't waste your breath on tomfool talk about what you are afraid we may be *going* to get, but speak up about what we've *got*.

That is what Mr. Lawrence Sullivan has done in his book, just out, called *Bureaucracy Runs Amuck*. More power to him! Buy this book, read it line by line, and then back it up. If you have a drop of the old stuff in you, it will make you mad as a molested hornet. Let it. In such a situation as this book reveals, nothing can be done unless a whole lot of people get hopping mad, mad the way Gene Johnson used to get

drunk, according to his wife's statement,—that is, mad all the way through. If enough people could be got to read this work, the country would enjoy a very warm spring this year, and an uncommonly hot summer.

Up to twelve years ago we still had a pretty fair imitation of representative government and something more or less resembling a free economy. Maybe it was nothing to brag about, but we managed to rub along under it, and we even thought it had a little edge on the systems prevailing in other countries. Then twelve years ago we abolished all that and went in for a State-planned economy under a régime of collectivist Statism administered autocratically through a bureaucracy with no end of delegated powers. Washington became the automobile; the states, counties, municipalities, were the smell. The legislative branch of the government took on the marionette or office-boy status, and when the executive branch took snuff the judicial branch obligingly sneezed. You may call this régime Communist, Fascist, National-Socialist, whichever you please, for those terms mean nothing in the world but that the person using them has a nasty temper. They define nothing; they are merely so-many different trade-names for the same thing, which is autocratic collectivist Statism.

Very well. Now, after twelve years of this, how has it worked? What has it come to? Mr. Sullivan's book is an auditor's statistical report on the net result; and in the slang of the street, it is *some* result. Here are a few, only a few, salient items:

In 1933 the executive branch had 572,091 civil employes. In 1943 it had 3,162,199; more than three for every one in the military services; and

one for every forty-one of the population. What price our system of "checks and balances" now, with that amount of patronage at executive disposal?

What price? Well, let's look further. Since 1933, 195 new Federal agencies have been set up to govern us. During 1942, the personnel of our bureaucracy multiplied at an average rate of 4,000 every working day. Bureaux are set up, not by specific act of Congress, but by arbitrary presidential decree or edict, alias "executive order." They govern by executive orders, proclamations and "directives," all of which, unless set aside by the courts, have the force of law. In the four years of civil war, President Lincoln, who was publicly reviled as a tyrant and a monster, issued two executive orders. The present Administration has issued considerably over four thousand! What price representative government and "due process of law" in the United States today?

The cost of the State's publicity, mainly propaganda, comes to \$69,200,000 a year. Its propaganda-mill in Washington occupies 33 acres of floor-space, and employs 7,900 workers. Read Mr. Sullivan's report on it, and then decide whether all this is worth its keep.

In the seven years 1933-40 Congress handed the President blank-check appropriations of nearly \$20 billion. Mr. Sullivan tells you a good deal of what the country has got out of this little investment in autocracy, and the story isn't pretty.

The thing that will really make the reader red-hot under the collar is the incredible stupidity of the planners when they had even a third-class job of planning to do. For instance, more war-contracts have already been cancelled *during* this war than were cancelled *at the end* of the last war. What price intelligent planning? They fixed things so that the rubber-programme was administered by seven separate agencies, and for seven months it never turned a wheel. Eleven different agencies had their hands on the coffee-supply, and it is no trouble to remember what the result was. During 1942 the grocery-manufacturers of America had to keep daily track of twenty-one Federal agencies in Washington. Out of more than a thousand State-built civil air-ports constructed by the WPA and CWA during the six years 1933-39, only thirty-one are big enough to land a fighting plane. And the OPA! My only wish is that the housekeepers of this country would read Mr. Sullivan's chapters on what all the OPA's fine economic planning has done with their food-supply. The women of Paris on October 5, 1789, didn't put on what you would call a handsome show exactly, maybe, but you somehow

get up a lot of respect for them when you see the kind of thing that American housekeepers are having to stand for.

Our government, being thoroughly centralized, is now probably "the most corrupt on earth," as Mr. Jefferson said it would be. One must expect that, so what Mr. Sullivan says about it is not especially stirring. What he reveals about the subversive tactics of collectivists in public office, however, is worth close attention. My view of this may be old-fashioned, but here it is: I have no objection to collectivists, whether they call themselves Fascist, Nazi, Communist or whatever. In fact, I am all in favor of them, according to the first Article of the Bill of Rights. Let them print, publish, belch and gyrate all they want to, as long as they don't infringe on the equal rights of others. But when they take a job under a civil system and use it to undermine that system, then to me they aren't collectivists any longer. They are plain damned scoundrels, and ought to be booted out; and this goes for anybody, be he President or be he poundkeeper. Moreover, it strikes me that if we have reached the point where we must go to Europe or England for a new civil system, and must import European or English professors to boss the job of bringing that system in, it is high time this country sold out at thirteen cents on the dollar and shut up shop.

But our system has never been in any serious danger from the honest out-and-out collectivist. What has brought us to ruin is the misguided brother who has been saying for a century that the economic body can't get on without *some* small measure of State control, *some* little State supervision, *some* State planning. I wish Mr. Sullivan had ended his book with a paragraph pointed straight at this well-meaning ninny, saying, "There!—now you see what your confounded nonsense has brought us to. What would you do to a doctor who told you that your physical body couldn't get on without just a *little* implantation of cancer, *some* tuberculosis, *some* anaemia? You have a fine chance now to see exactly what the State is, and exactly what will happen if you let it get the upper hand of you for a single minute. So after this for Heaven's sake keep quiet and let the lesson sink in."

II



R. SULLIVAN'S book is, as I said, a statistical report on how things stand in our central government and how they are working. Mr. John T. Flynn has just now brought out a book called *As We Go Marching*, which is a historical report on the suc-

cessive steps by which things got that way. The two books should be,—must be,—read together, Mr. Sullivan's first, then passing directly, with no interval, into Mr. Flynn's. To do this and do it now, at once, seems to me to be the most urgent duty that every American citizen owes himself or herself.

This is no exaggeration. I mean it. I mean it because very few of us, living in a thick fog of State propaganda, have the faintest idea of what our jobholders are actually doing, and what the consequences will be. Fewer still have any idea of just how they came to be doing what they are doing; and obviously, until the causes of things are known, they can't be intelligently dealt with. One of Mr. Flynn's great merits is that he shows so clearly how, for sheer lack of knowledge, many right-minded patriotic people are today supporting political measures and ideas which have run them straight into a civil system which they detest and despise. As long as these two books are on the market at two dollars each, four dollars for the two, there is no excuse for this.

Furthermore, people should learn something from their own errors of judgment. If they run through a red light by a close shave, and then run through the next one, and the next, and so on, the coroner's jury finally brings in a verdict that they jolly well deserved what they got. Red lights on our present situation have been showing at every block since Mr. Jefferson hung out the first blazer a hundred and twenty years ago, and we have run through every one of them. Quite a few of us are still alive who saw a whole cluster of them hung out in the 'eighties and 'nineties. In the years after 1918, Italy and Germany posted red lights as big as the flash from the Eddystone lighthouse, but we went right on through them. Now we see what our inattention has cost us; and as Mr. Flynn shows, there is only one more red light ahead of us, and if we run through that one the next move is up to the coroner and the undertaker.

Mr. Flynn's book is a comparative study of totalitarian Statism's origin and progress in three countries, Italy, Germany and the United States. It is not a formal history. As he says, it is a search for the elements, the economic and political roots, which produced this growth in the first two countries, "in order to make a list of those elements which must be united to produce it in America."

One must be grateful to Mr. Flynn for puncturing the absurd belief, so widespread among us, that Italy and especially Germany were the easiest nuts to crack with the idea of Statist regimenta-

tion, whereas they are by nature the hardest in all Europe. Any one who thinks they have a congenital flair for being dragooned and bossed around is simply too ignorant to be allowed at large. Whatever Mr. Flynn's work may do or fail to do, it does show conclusively that the roots of the great disorder are not indigenous to any country, but may be found everywhere in Western society.

Mr. Flynn begins with Italy at the time when Italians got the fatal idea that it was the State's business to do something about "social problems," mainly the problems of involuntary poverty and recurrent depressions. No jobseeker could get into power unless he supported this idea, nor could he hold his job unless he showed some sort of results. The Liberal jobholder Depretis in 1885 turned to one of the jobholder's oldest expedients, the unbalanced budget,—State spending of borrowed money in order to allay discontent, tide over depression, and, above all, to keep the jobholder's grip on his job. His Liberal successors, Crispi and Giolitti, continued this policy of using State debt as a device to eke out purchasing-power, and it became permanent.

On the heels of this policy inevitably came militarism. The policy of borrow-and-spend means debt, and debt means paying interest, and that means taxes, and high taxes mean a brake on production, which means unemployment and restlessness. Italy came out in 1914 with a load of debt heavy enough to sink a ship. But people are more willing to be taxed for an army than for anything else; and besides, a conscript army serves the jobholder as a sort of single-track WPA to take up the slack of unemployment. Hence militarism comes after borrow-and-spend as night follows day. Mr. Flynn does not mention it and I may be wrong, but I do not recall a single instance where, after conscription was once established in peace-time, as it was with us a year or so before this war, it was ever given up. This fact, if it be a fact, is significant.

After militarism, the jobholder's next resource is imperialism; and concurrently with all the foregoing grows the idea of a State possessed of unlimited powers centralized in the executive branch, administered through a bureaucracy controlling and directing the whole economic life of the people. To confirm this idea it is necessary to exploit "crises" and to manufacture them, if need be. Crisis follows crisis; depression is a crisis, war is a crisis, reconstruction is a crisis, inflation is a crisis, all tending to stiffen the structure of the totalitarian system. The most memorable sentence in Mr. Flynn's book is that this sys-

tem "is born in crisis, lives on crises, and cannot survive the era of crisis." Then, with bureaucracy's exactions and misfeasances growing, with production dislocated and languishing to the point where it can no longer pay the State's bills, with civil disturbances increasing in number and intensity, the stage is set for the last scene,—a military despotism,—and some Mussolini or Hitler makes his entrance.

These, then, are the elements which Mr. Flynn finds in the story of Italy and Germany. The last section of his book treats of the United States with reference to these elements. "Tax and tax, borrow and borrow, spend and spend";—we set out on that tempting political short-cut through the economic "crisis" in 1933. Militarism;—we have developed that on the grand scale. Our imperialist post-war plans and projects now know no bounds. We propose to lay down the law to all creation. The bureaucratic State is already ours, as Mr. Sullivan has shown us. The last step in the Rake's Progress of Italy and Germany is still before us; we have not as yet a military despotism. Can we refrain from taking that step? Mr. Flynn thinks so; but shall we refrain from it? Whether so or not, Mr. Flynn has done his duty superbly well. In his final chapter he hoists our last red light with full warning that it is our last one, and that we are fast coming up on it; and nobody now can do more than that, single-handed.

The impressive lesson of Mr. Flynn's book and Mr. Sullivan's is the one laid down by Mr. Jefferson in a letter to Edward Carrington: "If ever the people become inattentive to the public affairs, you and I and Congress and Assemblies, judges and governors, shall all become wolves." These books once more make it clear, as a friend of Herbert Spencer's said, that "wherever government is, there is villainy." They show that the

saying is as true now as it was when Thomas Paine said it, that "the trade of governing has always been a monopoly of the most ignorant and the most vicious of all mankind,"—and above all, they show that this is so only because the people permit, nay, encourage it to be so.

III

I END with a word about Mr. Garett's *A Time Is Born*, which to me is a marvel in its way. I never saw anything like it. In substance, it is a history of man's economic life,—good history, sound history; and yet there is only one word to describe its quality;—it is *charming*. If the reader says that no such thing is possible and that I have lost my mind, I shall not blame him, for I should say that myself if I were in his place; but there it is. As a book of fact, it is profound; and what makes it ingratiating and charming is, first, its transparent simplicity, and second, the wise, affectionate and hopeful view of humanity that pervades it. This makes it a book for any age. As I read it I thought how it would have fascinated me in my schooldays; it fascinates me equally now. *Mansueti possidebunt terram*, the Psalmist said, the *amiable* shall possess the earth, as indeed in the long run they may. Mr. Garrett has performed the miracle of producing a truly amiable work on economic history; let us hope it may possess the market.

Bureaucracy Runs Amuck. By Lawrence Sullivan. The Bobbs-Merrill Co., New York. 318 pp. \$2.00.

As We Go Marching. By John T. Flynn. Doubleday, Doran Co., New York. 272 pp. \$2.00.

A Time Is Born. By Garett Garrett. Pantheon Books, New York. 234 pp. \$2.50.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, Editor

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THIS month I have before me several books which fall into three orders or categories. Those in the first order I can recommend without reservation to everybody. Next come two books which I can recommend in the highest terms, but only to a certain kind of person. If you are that kind they would be worth a hundred times their price; if not, they wouldn't be worth a button to you. Then in the third class are one or two which as a whole are pretty poor but which have something in them that for collateral reasons you can't very well afford to miss.

Beginning with the first batch, Professor Becker's *How New Will the Better World Be?* supplies an ample corrective to all the infectious bilge which wishful dreamers and windy ignorami are forever spouting about the new and better world that is waiting for us just around the corner of this war. Like typhus and the *lues Veneris*, this disorder runs riot in wartime, and unlike them there seems nothing that can be done about it. In the last war it claimed more victims than influenza. In the present war it has encountered a good deal of germ-proof skepticism, so the hospital-list is mostly made up of the lunatic fringe. Still, there is plenty of time ahead of us, apparently, for the disease to spread before the war is over, and it will be all to the good for even the wisest of us to load up with a bookful of Old Doc Becker's Peerless Prophylactic right now, and keep it handy till the clouds roll by.

Mr. Becker devotes his first two chapters to a

consideration of what is wrong with the world we have; mainly war and unemployment. Is it likely that in the New World we shall be rid of those? Then proceeding with the questions which follow in logical order, Mr. Becker weighs the chances that the spirit of nationalism will be at all abated, and that the sovereignty of the State will be curbed. Shall the New World be free of power-politics and imperialism? Shall it be internationalist?—well, exactly what kind of internationalism do we want, and what kind can we get? Shall it be collectivist, and if so, what kind of that do we want and can we get?

These questions look easy. You can make up an answer out of wishes, dreams and wind with practically no trouble at all. But when you bring them down out of the stratosphere into the realm of fact you perceive that they are very tough. You perceive that before you attempt to deal with them you had better understand them, and here is where the Old Doc's Prophylactic comes in. The formula for Peerless is one part good history, four parts good logic, and five parts imperturbable common sense; and you can't beat it for efficiency. Take one middling liberal hooker at bedtime and one in the morning before the newspapers come in, and you are proof against any and all germs that the wishful dreamers and starry-eyed enthusiasts can scatter.

Another book that I recommend without reservation to all and sundry is called *Socialism Is Not Inevitable*, by Henry K. Kozmian. It is brief, paper-bound, and costs fifty cents. In its way, it

is extremely well-written; that is, its style is simple, direct, forceful and in the main, correct; nevertheless, often suggesting strongly that English is not the writer's native tongue. Yet curiously, just as sometimes a foreign intonation of English is attractive and pleasant to our ear, just so these little awkwardnesses help the book out. Every once in a while the reader has the interesting experience of noticing how much better one gets the gist of a sentence shaped in this unusual, rather stumbling phraseology, than if it had been built as a native writer would build it. I have never before had this experience repeated so often in a single work.

In this small book Mr. Kozmian tells everything that the average reader needs to know about the various basic forms of Socialism, their rise and progress in modern times, their strength and weaknesses, and their probable outcome hereafter. In short, the book is a first-class primer. If it interests the reader and makes him want to go further, it will put him straight on the way to a more elaborate work, for instance, Max Hirsch's *Democracy vs. Socialism*, which is quite probably the last word on the subject.

What first strikes the reader is the brilliant flashes of insight which here and there illuminate a sentence and start up a whole current of collateral thought, apparently without the author's intending to do anything of the kind or even noticing that he might do so. This lack of self-consciousness, which indeed pervades the whole book, puts the reader in sympathy with the author and holds his attention. Then also one is struck by the peculiar, almost naïve freshness of treatment given to subjects which are usually dealt with in cut-and-dried professional terms; for instance, the illustration taken from the button-making industry,—it is perfect, but how did he ever think of it? One would say that Mr. Kozmian must some time have been in the cloak-and-suit business to have it occur to him, for the chances of its occurring to a person not in the trade would be about one to ten thousand.

But the capital instance is in Mr. Kozmian's first three paragraphs. Here he has put in the simplest possible language a fact of terrifying importance, the fact which above all others should be known to everyone, and of which virtually no one is aware. I shall put it in professional terms. The normal evolution of society is from the primitive militant type, organized in an undifferentiated mass under a leader,—the society of Jenghiz-

Khan, for example,—toward the industrial type, organized by differentiation into groups which act and react upon one another within the framework fixed by the laws of economics. Therefore the type of society which the Stalins, Roosevelts, Hitlers, are tending to produce is a reversion towards the primitive. These men do not represent progress at all; they represent regression. Nor do they occur in the historical order of progress, but quite the contrary; they are improvised men, creatures of the moment, harbingers of rebarbarization.

Now put Mr. Kozmian's first three paragraphs side by side with the foregoing, and see how much more effectively he tells the same story.

Next I have a couple of small books which are related, in a way. One is called *Food*, and the other is called *Bureaucracy*; the relation is obvious. Both of them are so well written that they could be read for pleasure and general information, even if one had no special reasons for being keen on the subjects; and most of us have quite a lot of reasons for being keen on them. The first book, *Food*, is of special interest to housekeepers; and yet I don't know about that, for since a good many men pay the bills they may presumably be interested to see how their money goes and why more and more of it keeps going without being reflected in the bill of fare. Still, if our housekeepers read it, and they are fools if they don't, there is small chance but that their menfolk will hear about it good and plenty; so I shall let my recommendation stand.

The point of the book is that bureaucratic dealing with the problems of food-supply has made a shocking mess, just as anybody with a grain of common sense might know it would. The authors write dispassionately, with malice toward none and with charity for all; and they also write with a dry humor which is very pleasant. All this is fine; but there are few consumers in the country, few farmers, few distributors, whether at wholesale or retail, who will read the first twenty-five pages of this book (an analysis of the food-shortage) without getting pretty wrathful, and the further they go the warmer they will get. Then when finally they come to an analysis of price-fixing, rationing, subsidies, rollbacks, support-prices and the devil-and-all of other political nostrums,—and when they reflect on how they are being robbed, swindled and pushed around in order to keep all this nonsense going,—they will be madder than wet hens, as they ought to be.

The only sensible thing to do is what the authors recommend,—to throw the OPA and its fool policies into the ashcan and restore the price-system, under which the distribution of food-supply is regulated by “the higgling of the market.” No better or fairer regulator was ever found or ever will be. Ten to one there isn’t a man in the whole OPA whose wife would trust him to do the marketing for a family of five; and yet it is the policies of just such unhandy gillies that we have been trusting to regulate the food-supply for a population of 130 million! Can you beat that for absurdity?

The companion-piece to the foregoing, called *Bureaucracy*, is written by a jobholder in the office of Lend-Lease. It is not the kind of thing one might imagine from its title. The author is not out for the bureaucrat’s scalp, nor yet does he hold any brief for him. As the sub-title indicates, he is concerned with bureaucracy only as “a challenge to better management” in the technical sense. He is evidently quite something of a horse-doctor in the Taylor-Gilbreth line of “scientific management” which had a big go in this country just before the last war; and a good thing too, like other good things, if you don’t run it into the ground, which the author doesn’t do. He is very reasonable. He thinks that efficiency-methods can be applied to our bureaucracy little by little with good results, and he gives a number of general directions for applying them. He says plainly that it will be the deuce of long job, and he seems aware of a good many obstructions in the way of its being carried out; still, he believes it would be worth trying. The author is a man of some humor and writes well enough to make his book interesting and enjoyable and, as far as it goes, convincing.

But the actual moral of these two books, *Food* and *Bureaucracy*, is one that the reader will draw at once. It is the one that Artemus Ward drew from the career of Napoleon. The trouble with Napoleon, said Ward, was that he tried to do too much and did it. Just that is the root-trouble with our bureaucracy, and it would be the root-trouble with any bureaucracy in a government as heavily centralized as ours is. Centralize a government to the point where as Mr. Hopkins said, it “will determine the kind of food, clothing, housing and businesses which we shall have, and will affect every detail of our daily lives,” and the thing becomes simply impossible. Let it pass that our whole roster of jobholders from top to bot-

tom are most dreadful swine,—and I certainly would not go so far as to say they aren’t,—all right, bounce them out and fill their places with the best and wisest men on earth, and your administration would be as appalling a botch as ours is now. The game-law is always out on jobholders for whatever one may choose to think of them, but we had all better remember that there are a few oversized jobs in the world, jobs too big and too diversified for human ability to compass, and that this job is very much one of them.

Now finally I must speak of a book four years old and now in its seventh printing, Carl Snyder’s *Capitalism the Creator*. There are two annoying little faults to be found with it which I shall get off my mind at once. First, its persistent misuse of economic terms. Mr. Snyder is one of the best statisticians in the world, which is a full-time job, so perhaps it would be exorbitant to expect much of him in another line; still, in this matter he really should do better than he does. Second, the index is skimpy. The book has an encyclopædic value, and should be indexed accordingly.

Otherwise the work deserves nothing short of the greatest admiration and the highest praise. It is a complete account, backed up with graphs and charts, of the achievements of private enterprise in American industry during the last century and a half. It is essentially a reference-book, although I dislike saying that because my readers may jump to the notion that it is dry and dull; whereas, it is exactly the opposite—clear, forceful, interesting, attractive. One sometimes wonders at the skill which can put out such an amazing lot of technical information in such easy and agreeable shape; but then one remembers that in the first place the man has an amazing story to tell, and in the second place he is one of the rare birds who really knows his stuff, knows it with an experienced and well-seasoned familiarity. Likewise when one wonders at the marvels of Dutch and Flemish portraiture one remembers that the artists not only had great faces to paint, but also that they had seen great faces by the hundred all around them ever since they were born, and knew all about them.

One special reason I have for urging this superb work upon my readers is that it gives such point to the fact, which unfortunately so few of us realize, that collectivism never pioneers, never ventures, never initiates, never assumes any risks, never achieves, never produces anything on its own. Like the locusts, all it does is to “take over.”

You close Mr. Snyder's account of private enterprise's achievement, the like of which the world has never seen or dreamed of, and you realize as never before the prodigious evil that collectivism has done in taking over this mighty store of energy and wealth, wasting it at wholesale, converting the residue to its own ignorant and degrading purposes, and hamstringing the beneficent forces which produced it. As Mr. C. T. Revere has observed, ours is the only country today "whose government is hostile to those elements among its people who have been most largely responsible for its prosperity, its productive capacity, its standard of living, and its contribution to the winning of the war."

Thus Mr. Snyder's work compels the realization that this is a disgraceful and shameful fact; and doubly so because our own people, Americans, none else, have caused it to become a fact.

II

NOW for a couple of books whose value is contingent on the kind of person the reader is, and are to be recommended accordingly. One is entitled *For the Good of All*; it is a brief treatise on war, taxes and politics considered in the light of ethical principles.

There are persons who do not believe that ethical principles have any place in public affairs; or indeed, that they have actually any place anywhere except in quarters where it is an understood thing that their exposition is perfunctory. Such persons do not believe that human life has any spiritual qualities, or that justice, faith, honor, conscience, truth, are more than talking-points. Not recognizing any gold standard in such matters, they have no feeling for them, no consciousness of any profound spiritual affinity with them, and any work which deals with them as facts in the order of nature finds no response whatever and is put down as moonshine. Then there are others who are the opposite of these. To them the great realities of human life are spiritual realities and its great qualities are spiritual qualities; and their response to a work which deals with them well and truly is one of loving gratitude. If therefore you are one of these latter, you will find this a book of gold, every line of it pure gold. If you are of the former class, it will be just so much waste paper.

The other book is *Plea for Liberty*, by the French writer Bernanos. If the reader is of the right sort to take it,—and the wrong sort are here-

by warned off,—he will find it the most impressive, moving and heartsearching thing he has read in many years. I implore him not to miss it. I suggest he begin with the second section, which is in the form of an address to Mr. Roosevelt, and then go back to the preface and read straight through.

III

MY space has run out ahead of the books in my third category, so I shall give a word to only one, *Shark's Fins and Millet*. The author is a Polish woman, evidently of a roaming, restless disposition, who made her way into China and into relations with Mme. Chiang and various other people more or less important in Chiang Kai-Shek's regime. Her book is the overworked "personal narrative" sort of thing, and even for that it is poor, poor as Job's turkey. But Mr. Edgar Snow, who is in a position to know, says her facts are correct. If they are, they start a reader on a very lively spell of wondering what exactly are the prospects for our considerable investments in Brother Chiang's enterprise. Also, whether it wouldn't be a good thing to hear a little publicity once in a while from somebody outside the Soong family. These matters are pretty important, and even a poor book that sets us thinking about them in earnest is well worth wading through.

How New Will the Better World Be? By Carl L. Becker. A. A. Knopf, New York. 246 pp. \$2.50.

Socialism Is Not Inevitable. By Henry K. Kozmian. William Frederick Press, New York. 95 pp. \$.50.

Food. By Frank A. Pearson and Don Paarlberg. A. A. Knopf, New York. 239 pp. \$2.75.

Bureaucracy. By J. M. Juran. Harper and Bros., New York. 138 pp. \$2.00.

Capitalism the Creator. By Carl Snyder. The Macmillan Co., New York. 473 pp. \$3.75.

For the Good of All. By Gilbert M. Tucker. Fleming H. Revell Co., New York. 126 pp. \$1.50.

Plea for Liberty. By Georges Bernanos. Pantheon Books, New York. 272 pp. \$3.00.

Shark's Fins and Millet. By Ilona Ralf Sues. Little, Brown and Co., Boston. 331 pp. \$3.00.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, Editor

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A CORRESPONDENT wrote in to the Council's New York office a few days ago, saying he wished I would be a little less enthusiastic, because I kept him buying books all the time, and he couldn't afford it. Well, this seems reasonable. As Abe Potash once said, "too much is enough," and perhaps I have been overdoing the thing a little, though if publishers keep on producing surprisingly good books that are right up my readers' street, I don't see how I can cold-shoulder them, exactly. But the dry season for serious books is almost here, so I think I am in a way to save this correspondent some money. In the July issue I shall probably vary the monotony by talking about two or three back-number novels which have been on my mind for a long time, and he can borrow those from the public library if he has not already read them. I may also perhaps be able to lighten his budget a little for August; and then in September we will think about going back to business at the old stand.

This month, however, our correspondent may be sure of having it all his own way, for I shall discuss a whole line of literature which I distinctly don't want him to buy, not any of it. In fact, I don't think I shall even need to mention the name of a single book, though as my readers doubtless know by this time, I should not be at all squeamish about doing so if the need arises. One book in particular our correspondent need not worry about; he could not buy, beg, borrow or steal a copy to save his life, although it is published by our government. It is an oversize volume of 178 pages in very small type, to be circulated for purposes of propaganda overseas. The copy before me bears a paster, printed in red, "Restricted. This publication is not for distribution in the United States, or to American civilian

or military personnel overseas." For whom then is it? It is for the use of the "OWI outposts overseas and, through them, of such important officials or editors in foreign countries as have need of such information." Just so. Exactly. We shall recur to this later.

II

THE other books which I have in mind to speak of are schoolbooks, textbooks in various branches of "social science" which are put out for the use of children and youths in the schools of our fair land. My attention was drawn to this subject in the first instance by a friend whose boy is doing the regular routine-work in English along with his other studies in one of our private schools. The school is said to be a good one, rather out of the ordinary, and no doubt is. My friend handed me a book which the school was using as required reading in English, and asked me to look it over and tell him what I thought of it.

The book has five hundred pages. It was put together by an army officer and a teacher in one of New York City's high schools. It is an anthology of excerpts from about eighty writers in prose and verse, and except for perhaps a dozen pages, all these writers are contemporary, and only one of them is in the least conspicuous for his knowledge and use of the English language. Among earlier writers Mr. Jefferson gets one page; so does Pericles. Lincoln gets three-quarters of a page; Mazzini, one-quarter; the prophet Micah, one-half; the Sermon on the Mount (bowdlerized) gets five pages. On the other hand, Elspeth Huxley gets twenty pages; Mr. Halper, eleven; Mr. MacLeish, twenty-two; Mr. Ziemer, eight; Mr. Feuchtwanger, two; Mr. Wallace, thirteen;

Mr. Thomas Mann, six; Madame Chiang, seven; and so on.

Exactly four-fifths of this book is straight war-propaganda and State-propaganda. Some of this, in fact most of it, is of an odiously low order. The first section and the third are full of war-stories of the conventional type, calculated carefully to inflame the worst passions and confirm the meanest and most unintelligent prejudices; and in two instances at least, this sort of thing finds expression in what with the utmost stretch of leniency can only be called the glossary of the gutter.

Now, regarding this book in its true character as an instrument of war-propaganda and State-propaganda, I can find nothing to say against it. The editors make no bones about avowing this character for it,—though in rather more delicate language,—so I presume its publication meets a considerable popular demand, and is therefore justifiable. For my own part, I admit I should go very gingerly about requiring a son of mine to subject himself to any influence so brutalizing, so degrading, and so devastating to any chance vestige of decent repugnance that it might encounter in a well brought up child's spirit. But this would be merely a personal sentiment on my part, rooted in general distaste for the chance of his growing up a vulgar dog with sensibilities blunted beyond hope. I do not know how many parents would concur in this distaste, or even how far my friend who showed me the book would go in concurring; I never asked him. But if most parents disagree with me on this point, as I dare say they may, they are within their rights and as far as I am concerned they shall have them.

This book, however, is used in at least one school, I don't know in how many more, not as an avowed instrument of propaganda, but as a required exercise in *English*; and that is very much something else again. I will say for the compilers that they do not advertise it specifically for this use, although their thirty pages of "study aids" (by which I presume they mean aids to study) do squint distinctly at some such purpose. But it is so used; and at this point I firmly draw the line.

Aside from the scraps lifted from the Bible, which run to a total of five pages and a half, there are two and only two entries which can be of any conceivable use to the student of English. Mr. Joad's four pages on the values of civilization are admirable. Their substance is sound, and their style is in all respects a model of distinction. If a child has any desire to know how his native language should be used, if he has any cultivable sense of its immense richness and dignity, its

excellency and nobleness, he will find these few pages worthy of his closest attention. The other useful entry is Mr. Chase's eleven pages of wholesome exercise in what he calls semantics. Nothing could be better, nothing is more urgently needed. Semantics appears to be a new-fangled name vamped up to dignify a very old-fangled set of precepts, which run somewhat as follows: Say exactly what you mean, and mean exactly what you say. If you don't know what a term means or are not sure of its meaning, don't use it until you find out; and as Mark Twain put it, when you are trying to express something, "use the right word and not its second cousin." If the right word is elusive, call a halt and fish for it until you get it, if it takes all summer. This is what I take to be the essence of semantics, and Mr. Chase's effort to popularize it deserves all praise. Slovenly utterance runs back to slovenly thinking, and both are singularly characteristic of our period and our people. Page after page of this book, for example, is spotted up with the words *democracy*, *democratic*, and I would wager good money that none of those who use them, from Mr. Roosevelt up to Emil Ludwig and from Mr. Justice Murphy down to Walter Lippmann, has the faintest notion, not only of what they mean, but of what he means when he uses them. In nine cases out of ten,—and that is a liberal count,—the word *democracy* is used as what Jeremy Bentham called an *impostor-term*, pure and simple. Putting the matter another way, its use is an act of profound intellectual dishonesty, as Mr. Chase's observations clearly show.

III

IF our citizens, or a majority of them, want their children to be pumped full of war-propaganda and State-propaganda, they are within their rights, and it should be done. Our civil system is based on the doctrines of popular will and majority-rule. This may be a rotten bad basis or it may be a very good one, but there it is, and we have to stand for it. Propaganda-machinery is popularly accepted as essential to the modern State's existence; hence there is general agreement, or majority-agreement, that every government must run a mind-molding mill more or less like the one Dr. Goebbels runs in Berlin, Mr. Davis in Washington, and whoever it is that runs the one in London. By the fundamental doctrine of our civil system this is as it should be. We all understand it and consent to it. As the economist Lavergne said to a visiting Englishman in the early days of the Second Empire, "How can I

tell you anything? Nobody talks to us except the government, and we do not believe what it says."

But I am not sure that the popular will, or the majority-will, is in favor of having our children fed on misbranded propaganda,—misbranded by intellectual dishonesty,—like my friend's boy who had three hundred pages of solid propaganda palmed off on him as an exercise in English. Perhaps the popular will does run that way. I do not know. I am simply not sure that it does, and as long as there is a doubt about it I think I am justified in raising the question.

For it is this matter of intellectual dishonesty that sticks tight in my crop. It is one of the chief counts I have against our government. If we had an equivalent of the Pure Food and Drugs Act for public utterances virtually all of our leading statesmen would be indictable. This Administration is intellectually so dishonest that apparently it can't produce anything, even the smallest thing, that looks like what it actually is. When it set out on the extremely simple job of coining a one-cent piece the resulting coin looked like a dime and made so much trouble that the people raised a breeze about it. If it were necessary to use a white alloy an honest government would have punched a hole through the coin so that there could be no mistake about its value, as the Belgian and French governments did with their small coinage. Along with plenty of thorough-going political scoundrelism, the Administration's chief personnel seems shot through with intellectual dishonesty. I have it from persons who know Mr. Wallace and Mr. Biddle well that they are men of high moral integrity and spotless intentions; yet as judged by the appalling bilge they exude for public consumption they must be, are bound to be, so intellectually confused as to deceive perhaps even themselves.

IV

THE experience of my friend's boy set me wondering about the general run of text-books used in our public schools, so I looked into the report of an examination made by Mr. Ralph Robey four years ago, covering some six hundred books approved for secondary schools in this country. These books are described in a general way as in the field of "social science"; that is to say, they are text-books in the several lines of elementary history, government, politics and economics. I was astonished at the number of them; I could hardly believe there were so many on the market, and I wondered whether this great new subject of

"social science" were not in danger of being a good bit overdone. Moreover, it struck me that school-children are pretty young to be faced with any serious detailed study of such subjects as economics and politics, and that the time devoted to them might be used to better purpose. They are hardly what one would call formative studies, like mathematics, logic, literature, and one would suppose that formative studies are what a youngster mostly needs. Perhaps a simple study of the actual mechanism of representative constitutional government, the kind of thing that I believe used to go under the name of "civics," though I am not quite sure,—perhaps this would do very well for the mind of a child at high-school age. But school-time is precious, the soon-tired attention of children is easily addled, and spreading so much of both around on studies which are not strictly formative seems very poor economy.

Then, too, as these books show, studies in "social science" are largely speculative and are therefore hard for teachers and children alike to deal with disinterestedly. This makes them distinctly inappropriate to immature minds; they give rise to too many controversial questions which are in their nature incapable of settlement, too many which are beyond the understanding of pupil and teacher alike, and too many on which the teacher has a distinct bias that in one way or another is bound to color the study.

It is worth noticing, for example, that a number of these books show a singular complacency towards the idea of "remaking America" by means which at present, at least, are not constitutional. They assume that the existing tendency towards some form of collectivist Statism is quite normal, regular, and will go on indefinitely as a matter of course. Some, not many, appear to welcome this tendency and encourage it in a guarded way. I remember hearing of a fuss made about this a few years ago, when it was alleged that certain teachers were using some of these books as a basis for "teaching Communism" in the public schools of New York, and the controversy brought up the question, as all such controversies do, of intellectual honesty in its relation to "academic freedom."

That relation seems simple enough to me. If intellectual honesty obliged me to teach Presbyterian doctrine to Roman Catholic students in a Roman Catholic school and I lost my job in consequence, I don't see how I could plead academic freedom with any justice. If I understand the notorious Scopes case correctly, I am against Scopes. He believed in progressive evolution, and intellectual honesty obliged him to shape his teaching accordingly. Well, he was perfectly free

to do so; there was no law in Tennessee against it. There was a law only against teaching evolution in the public schools. It was an asinine law, but for anything I can see the people of Tennessee were quite within their constitutional rights in making it and enforcing it. I think Scopes simply had no case.

Now, if there is one thing against which our whole civil system stands opposed, it is any approach to collectivist Statism. If the people wish to modify that system, to change it in any way, or to destroy it and replace it with another, they are perfectly within their competence in so doing. So far, however, they have not done so. The people pay the bills for public education, and the government supervises it. If I am interested in some civil system to which ours is opposed, and if intellectual honesty obliges me to sound off about it, I have the constitutional right to do so; but not in the public schools. A school-teacher is a servant of the existing system, paid by a public which maintains that system, and he is committed to it until further notice. He takes the job voluntarily; no one obliges him to take it. As a foot-loose citizen he has a constitutional right to range where he likes in the whole world of civil systems, but when he takes a job as a teacher under any civil system, his academic freedom stops at the point of the responsibilities he incurs.

Going back to the "restricted" document which the government has published for the benefit of editors and public men overseas who might like to know more about us than they do, the information it contains concerning our government is of a peculiar character. The editors say plainly that it describes the government as it is now, not as it was ten years ago or as it may be ten years hence. What this section of the work amounts to,—and it is a large section, disproportionately so,—is a glorification of Mr. Roosevelt's regime, done in minute detail. For the purposes of this volume, United States history does indeed begin in 1932. Foreign editors and statesmen might get the impression that before Mr. Roosevelt appeared we were all living in trees and went around beating one another to death with stone hatchets. There are a good many of us who think America produced a pretty fair civil system and a pretty fair political tradition long before Mr. Roosevelt was ever heard of; otherwise why should so many refugees from other civil systems have come here? We believe that on the whole our record of accomplishment under that regime is nothing to be sneezed at; not perfect, certainly far from that, but as it stands we will cheerfully match it against any other since the world began. Furthermore,

we firmly believe that Mr. Roosevelt's regime has atrociously violated our political tradition and broken down our civil system, and we are properly sore about it. Hence with so many of us feeling as we do, and this being an election year, it was a good safe play to keep this book out of the hands of the electorate.

V

SO now I think I have played fair with the Council's correspondent. I have not asked him to buy any books. On the contrary, I have shown him a whole line that I ask him not to buy. I also ask him to keep a sharp eye on the schools in his bailiwick, and if he finds that they are buying any such books or using them, I ask him to raise a thundering row about it. First, let him make a careful examination and satisfy himself that this new venture into "social science" is not being more than a little overdone. Then I ask him to see to it, for instance, that "required reading in English" means English, not misbranded propaganda. Propaganda, all of it you like, if you want it, but not that way. Then let him see to it that an author's intellectual honesty has not run his textbook off into some unintentional attitude of unfairness or disloyalty towards the system and tradition which he is supposed to be serving. Very few text-books, I believe, very few indeed, deliberately follow the contemptible policy of "boring from within," but some unquestionably do; and these are easily identified.

Finally I ask our correspondent to learn thoroughly and proclaim loudly the great truth which Americans once knew well and no longer know at all, that loyalty to a civil system distinctly does not mean loyalty to jobholders. The two are widely separate, for the first is unconditional and the second is strictly conditional; it is "good for this day and train only." The jobholder is always in danger of being carried away by illusions of grandeur, so the loyal citizen ought always to keep the bull-whip handy and keep himself in steady practice with it. Time and again Mr. Jefferson gave warning that the jobholder is something to be distrusted, disbelieved, watched, bullyragged and persistently kicked into good behavior. The juridical rule is reversed in his case; the jobholder should always be held guilty until he proves himself innocent, and the citizen who is truly and jealously loyal will make this his rule. The truer his loyalty to his civil system, the more grudging, exacting, suspicious, uneasy, niggling, close-fisted he will be with his loyalty to jobholders.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, Editor

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OUT of the books now accumulated on my desk there are four which I especially wish my readers would go through carefully, word by word. The first of these is Mr. Hayek's *The Road To Serfdom*. The title is reminiscent of Herbert Spencer's essay on *The Coming Slavery*, published in 1884; and indeed Mr. Hayek's work is essentially little more than an *ex post facto* pointing-up of Spencer's treatise. Any one who forty-odd years ago had set his mind at work on Spencer's reasoning could see the impending fate of Western society as clear as daylight. I can vouch for this, for I was one who did it, and not by any means the only one; and now Mr. Hayek comes along to show how far we have got on our way to the goal of our destiny, and to show how and why we have got there. Spencer showed where the road we were on would take us and must take us; Mr. Hayek shows that it has taken us (that is, Western society as a whole) exactly there.

He makes a superb job of it, by far the best I have seen in any recent work. I sincerely hope my readers will give it the closest study of which their minds are capable, because it is a work of great enlightenment, as Spencer's was. It advocates no action, draws no blue-prints; it is concerned with courses of thought, and this is why it is so valuable. Everyone knows that before you can have right action you must have right thinking; and if you have right thinking, right action will follow. For this reason books which deal with the problems of right thinking are the most truly practical of all.

Mr. Hayek makes it clear that unless certain courses of thought are changed, the most calamitous evils will ensue. His work may be taken incidentally as an irrefragable argument against collectivism and the "social legislation" which runs off as straight into totalitarianism as sewage to the drains; it may be taken as blockbusting

ammunition for use against a centralized "planned economy"; or again, as a showing-up of the essential identity of socialism, communism, fascism, nazism and other collectivist nostrums. The book serves these purposes admirably, no doubt, but so do others, perhaps equally well. Its distinguishing merit, however, is in its clear consistent demonstration of the basic truth that before the aberrations in our public life can be properly dealt with, the courses of wrong thinking which produced them must be changed. Moreover they must be consciously changed, deliberately changed (indeed otherwise they would be changed to little purpose) and changed from within the individual by force of reason, not superficially by force of contagion, half-rational, half-emotional.

Perhaps Mr. Hayek's three chapters on centralized economic planning are those which deal with matters of most nearly immediate interest. His chapter on "Why the Worst Get On Top" opens a most interesting subject, though as he says, it does not exhaust it. We all know the truth of Paine's saying, that the trade of governing has always been a monopoly of the most ignorant and the most vicious of all mankind. We accept this as a fact but seldom, probably, are we led to wonder just precisely why it should be a fact. In our own history, for example, why should the Washingtons, Adamses, Jeffersons, Hamiltons, have been so promptly followed by the Pickerings, Wolcotts, McHenrys, etc.? Why should Henry Adams say that the succession of Presidents from Washington to Grant (and what he would say now!) is almost enough in itself to upset the whole Darwinian theory? Politically, society is like a mixture of oil and water which you may shake together till the cows come home, but it always settles with the oil on top. Mr. Hayek says much that is valuable about this phenomenon, but he is not quite explicit enough. He appears not to see that he has here before

him the operation of certain natural laws which work as invariably and inexorably in the realm of economics and politics as Newton's law works in the realm of physics.

Mr. Hayek has creditably little to say about "the shape of the world to come," which is a vast relief from the endless futility of the blue-printers. His few observations on the subject, however, are replete with good sense and worth careful attention. He is severe on the "cynicism" of some of us who take what he regards as a fatalistic or Laodicean attitude towards public affairs. I submit that his language is a great deal too hard. One may quite honestly believe that when a vicious social movement reaches a certain degree of volume and velocity the most expeditious and effective way with it is to give it its head. I might remind Mr. Hayek that we took that way with Prohibition, and the results have fully justified it. There is no cynicism about this; the question is simply which of two methods is the better for getting rid of a specific evil. If I were a voting man I should have voted early and often for Prohibition in the time of it; and I should have warmly resented a charge of cynicism based upon my having so voted.

THE second book which I unreservedly urge upon my readers is Mr. Parmalee Prentice's *Food, War and the Future*. The title does not sound promising. It is a short book, only 167 pages, and one might wonder, especially in reading the last two chapters, how so much could be got into so little space and put with such remarkable ease, simplicity and force. The answer is, in a word, that Mr. Parmalee Prentice knows his stuff, really knows it. He knows his authorities all the way back to the Garden of Eden, and he has the overmastering editorial sense to know precisely what to do with them. Here you have the primary reason why men of the last century like Buckle, Bagehot, Spencer, Lecky, were great writers. They could see their subject in its historical perspective, and could shape their treatment of it accordingly. Professor Huxley, for example, knew all his stuff, and knew just what to do with it; and this more than anything else is what makes the perusal of his prose an æsthetic delight. Mr. Hayek's book which I have just now mentioned has the same merit. Its author is perfectly clear in his own mind about what he wants to say, and he therefore says it clearly, simply, correctly. Nothing could be better.

Mr. Parmalee Prentice's subject touches everybody, and is therefore commonplace; and commonplace subjects are usually the most important.

This subject is the most important of all. It is the problem of the pressure of population upon the world's food-supply; or put in rougher terms, the problem of whether so many of us can avoid facing a general starving-time, and if so, how. If we all could eat six months and then fast six months this problem might not be so pressing, but unfortunately we can't. Our efficiency depends on our getting two or three squares per day with reasonable regularity. Hence the matter of keeping up a steady and sufficient food-supply is pre-eminently the subject of first consideration. The author reminds us that the period of general famine is by no means remote; it lasted in Western Europe up to the beginning of the nineteenth century. During the eighteenth century there were seven great famines in France, and in the famine of 1709 it is estimated that out of France's population of twenty million, one million died that year for lack of food. In the thickly populated Eastern countries recurrent regional famine has gone on without interruption, and is still going on.

All this makes one rather thoughtful. There is no escaping his conclusions. One little matter which he seems not to have noticed, and which in the long run,—not immediately, of course,—might affect his conclusions somewhat is the enormous area of potentially productive land which is now legally held out of production. Back in Mayor Gaynor's time the commissioner of taxes told me a rather astonishing thing. Assuming that all the unused land within New York City's limits were arable and were put under intensive cultivation, he said there was very nearly enough of it to support the population on a maintenance-ration. Making the same assumption for the entire thickly-populated North Atlantic seaboard, I should suppose it would bring the average margin of production to something like twenty miles west of New York City. But Mr. Parmalee Prentice presumably knows more about such matters than I do, and doubtless thought it was not worth mentioning.

The author is extremely and properly severe on the kind and quality of services rendered by the Department of Agriculture and by our agricultural schools. In his last chapter he discusses food-supply in relation to the problems of war and peace-making. His views of America's future, as judged by the way things are now going, are uncompromisingly realistic and are sound to the core; unfortunately, therefore, there is small chance of their being accepted or even considered by any but a very insignificant body of minority-opinion in the America of today. Mr. Parmalee Prentice writes for the record, how-

ever, which is all a wise man can do or should try to do.

THE third book on my preferred list is Mr. John H. Williams's *Post-War Monetary Plans*. It is a book not only to be read but to be kept at hand, because the hurricane-warnings on this subject are already being hung out, and the reader ought to get some sort of bearings on it. This book will give him as much as he needs to know in order to follow intelligently the course of current developments. It is short, and like Mr. Hayek's and Mr. Parmalee Prentice's, its simplicity and clarity are admirable.

One of the ablest and best-informed men in the line of international finance told me a month ago that of all the post-war problems "stabilization" would be the hardest nut to crack, and for his part he did not see any way to crack it. Mr. Williams's first sixty pages give the impression that his state of mind is much the same. The one thing he is sure of is that no fixed and elaborate fiscal policy should be attempted at this time; that the approach to the problem should be gradual, with temporary policies covering exigencies of a transition-period, and leaving the matter of a fixed policy to be determined later. He has a plan for this which seems good, if only it be practicable.

But there is the rub. Mr. Williams say plainly that "no stabilization-plan is feasible until there has been a meeting of minds between British and American public opinion"; and if anybody can tell us how to bring this about, he is just the man we all want to see. Mr. Crowther has clearly shown that the recent negotiations at Bretton Woods were motivated by what Mr. Dooley called "a common impulse f'r th' same money"—our money; and even Mr. Williams seems none too sure that this disposition can be dislodged and popular suspicions of it can be allayed. Our experiences after the last war make the prospect seem unpromising, but one never knows.

AND now finally, in order to back up Mr. Hayek, Mr. Parmalee Prentice and Mr. Williams with as rich a piece of humor as I have seen in a long time, I bring forward *Social Planning By Frontier Thinkers*, a small book which I promise will give the reader the time of his life. Don't miss it. It is in the form of a report on ten round-table conferences of adult students with a professor who is expounding the New Economic Order. You will

vow it is a leg-pull, because you can't imagine any vertebrated animal, let alone a human being, committing itself to such prodigious nonsense, such stupendous jackassery, and still being permitted to remain at large. Believe me, it is not a leg-pull; it is not satire or exaggeration. Every one of the professor's quotations is lifted straight from the utterance of a representative Frontier Thinker. It will make you pretty mad to reflect that we have so long been at the mercy of these dolts and their incredible lunacies, but you will nevertheless have a great laugh at the kind of thing we have been such toothsome suckers as to fall for.

II

SOME time ago I promised to discuss a novel or two in a succeeding issue, and I shall redeem that promise now, at least partially. Last year's crop of American fiction was uncommonly poor and thin. The one product that will best fill the bill for my reader in his leisure moments is Mr. Marquand's *So Little Time*. If he has already read it, no matter; take it up again. It will stand re-reading.

Mr. Marquand, I believe, is quite generally put at the head of our list of fiction-writers; he should be. His merits have been much discussed. In character-portrayal and especially in the fine art of making a character develop its own self-portrait through dialogue, his place is assured; no American contemporary is anywhere near him. This is one of two qualities which combine to give his work the authentic imprint of maturity; his fiction is unmistakably adult fiction, and to say that in these days is praise enough for any author.

But he must have more. The other quality which goes along with this one is Mr. Marquand's apparently complete unconsciousness of the impression his work is making, and must make, upon the mind of his reader. In managing this contrivance he stands alone among our fiction-writers, and raises his work almost to the level of greatness; more than any one he is with Trollope. In the Barchester series Trollope raises up scene after scene in a social life that for dullness, vacuity, vapidness and all-round hideousness, is simply appalling; and he does it apparently with no idea whatever that the civilized reader will and must form just that judgment on Barchester's society; indeed, with no idea that he will form any judgment on it, and this is great art.

So Mr. Marquand introduces us to a bevy of persons, not one of whom ever had an idea in the whole course of his existence; and by the

way, to summon up so many such persons and make them all jell into a sustained narrative without once for a moment losing their distinctive character is a most respectable feat of literary workmanship. These persons are engaged in the various activities of a social life which, taken as a whole, is nothing short of horrifying in its triviality, inanity, insipidity, its utter worthlessness. Yet as I said, in view of all this Mr. Marquand's detachment, like Trollope's, amounts to sheer unconsciousness. One could easily imagine Mr. Marquand as quite astonished, even indignant, if one should tell him he was presenting that kind of picture.

Well, Barchester was Barchester, and here is our social life at the present time. We all recognize it, we all recognize our own places in it. That's it, and that's all there is of it, and there isn't any more. Readers have complained that the book has a lame ending, but what else could it have? With no ideas, no philosophy, nothing to tie to or to guide him, the hero, if one may call him that, wanders purposelessly into St. Patrick's Cathedral. Never having thought, he is unable to think; a disordered emotional pressure forces some disorderly vagrant recollections through his mind; and so the poor man "just sets," and so ends the story. What better could such a product of such a society do?

The book may cause the reader to wonder whether the society which Mr. Marquand portrays is quite worth the inordinate sacrifices and sufferings that are apparently necessary to keep its head above water. The book makes that question pretty hard to dodge, and what sort of answer it gets must largely depend, I suppose, on the reader's temperament.

As interesting as the best of novels and more rewarding in solid substance is *Wind in the Sahara*. The author, Mr. Bodley, was an officer in the British army who served three years in India and did hard service in the war of 1914, afterwards going to Paris as military attache to the British Embassy. The treaty of Versailles left him completely fed up with soldiering, and he was low in his mind, wandering about at a loose end until his friend Lawrence of Arabia,—"a strange character, but a good one,—advised him to go to Africa and live with the Arabs, which he did. He lived with them as one of themselves for seven years, finding his existence there so attractive and satisfactory that he is all set to go back and take it up again as soon as this present war is over.

Mr. Bodley went the whole way with the Arabs. He adopted their language, dress, customs and

manners, their occupation, (sheep-raising), even their religion. Early in the game he became a Moslem, and not altogether *pro forma*, but evidently under some sort of genuine conviction. He fitted himself closely at every point to the day-to-day existence of the desert-wandering Arab, and in that life and among those associations he found a peace, a contentment, and an abounding sense of well-being, such as he had never known.

The book gives an astonishing amount of information, all of it authentic, and nearly all of it brand-new to most of us. The fifth chapter, for example, which is an exposition of the Moslem faith and religious practices, gives an unlearned person like myself a view of the subject which is entirely new and extremely interesting. So it is especially also with the author's discussion of the Arab's character and the quality of his domestic and social life. Mr. Bodley makes the Arab out to be a pretty noble fellow, all in all, a person of fine instincts, high-minded in his social relations; in short, very much of what our elders, back in the days before "the common man" became our object of worship, would have called a gentleman; and the book substantiates this impression in a most convincing way. Mr. Bodley wins the reader's warm regard by not imparting his information teacher-fashion or underlining it reporter-fashion. He sifts it in casually as he goes along, not making any special point of it, so that at the end the reader is quite astonished,—at least I was,—to see what its total adds up to. The book is as far from the wretched journalistic. What-I-Saw-in-Africa kind of thing as it is possible to get; as far removed in spirit as it is in substance; and I therefore recommend it unreservedly.

The Road to Serfdom. By Friedrich A. Hayek. Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago. 250 pp. \$2.75.

Food, War and the Future. By E. Parmalee. Prentice. Harper and Bros., New York. 164 pp. \$2.50.

Post-War Monetary Plans and Other Essays. By John H. Williams. A. A. Knopf, New York. 297 pp. \$2.50.

Social Planning by Frontier Thinkers. By Matthew Page Andrews. Richard R. Smith, New York. 94 pp. \$1.00.

So Little Time. By John P. Marquand. Little, Brown & Co., Boston. 595 pp. \$2.75.

Wind in the Sahara. By R. V. C. Bodley. Coward-McCann, New York. 224 pp. \$3.00.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, *Editor*

Vol. II, No. 3

November, 1944

MR. GIBSON, author of *The Road To Foreign Policy*, has been in our diplomatic service for many years and is now in retirement or on furlough, I don't know which. Like Offenbach's prince Adhemar de Manchabal, he may be *ministre ultraplénipotentiaire en disponibilité* or he may be out of it altogether. However this may be, he has produced a book which displays a great deal of earnest good sense and has a great many good things in it, and may therefore quite fairly be called a good book. Nevertheless, taken as a whole and with regard to its main purpose, it has very little practical value. Like so many of the good books that I have lately been reading, it put me in mind of a story which I have several-times told in print and shall no doubt have occasion to tell many times hereafter.

Some one once showed me a piece of manuscript music as a curiosity. It was written for the cornet and was uncommonly good. The only trouble was that the composer had nowhere made any place in it for the cornetist to take breath; and man is so constituted by nature that he can't push wind into a cornet continuously for any great length of time. So this composer had the natural constitution of mankind working against him and therefore, good as it was, the thing just wasn't practicable.

Mr. Gibson wants the United States to develop a settled continuous foreign policy, and he offers a number of excellent suggestions about it and about the way to get it. The British have one which goes steadily on, no matter which party may be in power; perhaps the best-known point in it is the "balance-of-power" principle, or as the sinful might call it, the principle of playing both ends against the middle. Mr. Gibson cites this as an example. If the British can carry on a continuous non-partisan foreign policy, why not we? It seems a fair question. Mr. Gibson is commendably severe on our tolerance of foreign pol-

icy by sleight-of-hand, by extemporization, by fits and starts, by Executive usurpation and the *fait accompli*. We are all with him in this, his views are for the most part reasonable, his recommendations are acceptable on the whole; so what about it?

Simply that in all this, good as it may be, Mr. Gibson has the Constitution of the United States working against him; he is in the exact fix of my musical composer. I refer to the Constitutional provision that Senators and Representatives must reside in the states they represent. As long as this requirement stands, members of the committee on foreign affairs in both Houses must let local interests outweigh national interests or lose their jobs; and in practice that means getting out of politics for good. The British jobholder is not under that disability; a member of the House can reside anywhere and represent any constituency that wants him. One might put it quite fairly that the United States is the only country in the world (as far as I know) that is estopped by its Constitution from having a settled and continuous foreign policy such as Mr. Gibson—and indeed all of us—would like it to have.

Yes, unfortunately, under our Constitution our foreign policy must be made up as we go along; made up by compromise, by trade-and-deal, by collusion with the Executive on matters of patronage, by canine cringing under the Executive's lash; made up, in short, as our domestic policies are made up, by such extemporizations as the exigencies of politics require. It is no trouble to construct a competent and practicable basic foreign policy. Mr. Jefferson did it to perfection in two lines of his first Inaugural Address: "Peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations; entangling alliances with none." That was our policy for a while, but how long did it last? Moreover, in any instance when we have departed from it, what have we got but impoverishment, hatred, grief and shame? Certainly nothing in the capi-

tal instances of 1898 and 1917, and our prospects in the present instance are not encouraging.

It is also easy enough to make suggestions as plausible as Mr. Gibson's; but if-as things stand they won't work and can't be made to work, what then? For these reasons one hardly knows how far to go in recommending Mr. Gibson's work. I read it with interest and with appreciation of its many merits; but much of my interest was antecedent, largely special, and I must be cautious about presuming on that in the case of other readers. Mr. Jefferson was all in favor of doing away with the diplomatic corps, regarding it as at best an ornamental folly, very costly and, on occasion, extremely mischievous. He anticipated Mr. Dooley in the belief that "an ambassador, Hinnessy, is a man that's no more use abroad than he wud be at home." This view still has some adherents who think that a diplomatic establishment is an expensive luxury, and that a good consular service would be quite enough for all practical purposes. On the other hand, Mr. Gibson has a good deal to say about the value of a diplomatic service, and perhaps his views on this debatable question alone (not disparaging other matters of equal interest) might carry the book with the general reader.

When all comes to all, Mr. Gibson has written a book which I find fundamentally superficial and therefore unsound. It has nevertheless many excellent merits for which I wish to say everything I can. They are, however, incidental and special; and they met and fully gratified my personal interest which was likewise special—an interest bred of watching at close range the workings of diplomacy in many lands for many years. If any of my readers shares this special interest with me by ever so little, he may take it that I recommend the book to him; otherwise I am by no means sure it would be worth his while.

II

IT IS a pleasure to observe that of late our university presses are occasionally bestirring themselves to put forth a creditable book or two on public affairs. Some years ago the Johns Hopkins press published Mr. Weinberg's superb *Manifest Destiny*, a work simply invaluable to any citizen who has even the ghost of a desire to know something about the course of American imperialism in its middle stages, its motives, and the men and methods devoted to its promotion. I can not overpraise this book or recommend it too warmly. Then lately the Chicago University press put out Mr. Hayek's book which I mentioned in last month's *Review*; and last spring the Yale press published *Omnipotent Government*, by Mr. von Mises, a work not so closely written as Mr.

Hayek's, but covering much the same general ground and tending to the same general conclusions. The material supporting these conclusions, and in many cases the arguments, are naturally diverse, thus making the two books complementary; neither will take the place of the other, but the sum of both together constitutes an "arsenal of democracy" that makes Mr. Roosevelt's achievement in that line look tawdry. Hence I urge my reader, if he can possibly manage it, to buy both these books and read them side by side.

This may be a good place for me to say once for all that an unqualified recommendation from me is an unqualified recommendation, no matter whether I give it in four lines or in four pages. The amount of space given to a book is determined by other considerations. The reader will therefore understand that I feel just as strongly about Mr. von Mises's book as about Mr. Hayek's, and about Mr. Weinberg's as I do about either. I know that my practice is not a general one with reviewers, nor can be; but I follow it in the comfortable feeling that my readers are rather a picked lot, predisposed to believe that I mean exactly what I say, and not requiring me to multiply words about it unless I see a good reason for so doing.

Returning now to the praiseworthy work of our university presses (and we all ought to do everything we can to buck up their courage and help them on with the good work) I see that right on the heels of Mr. Gibson's book the University of North Carolina press is bringing out *Our Jungle Diplomacy* by another ex-diplomatist, Mr. Sands, in collaboration with a journalist, Mr. Lalley. This is a book to be read side by side with Mr. Gibson's, because as an exhibit of actual diplomatic practice a great deal of it is straight down Mr. Gibson's alley. It backs up his criticisms and strengthens his contentions. It may tend—or again it may not—to make one think that most of Mr. Gibson's proposals are a little wide of the mark, somewhat like proposals to cure small-pox with salves. I admit it had that effect on me, but quite possibly I am a bit over-skeptical—the reader may judge.

Considered strictly as eligible reading-matter, quite apart from any special interest in the subject, the book is so good as to be well worth having. In spite of its rather lurid title, which I suspect was got up partly as a play on words since so many of us think of Latin America as exclusively jungle territory, the book is not at all in the old style of muck-raking. On the contrary, its language is much on the mild side, and all the clearer and more effective for that. In a word, it is the story of a diplomatist's experiences in Mexico and in various countries of Central America

during the administrations of Theodore Roosevelt, Taft and Wilson. Since our relations with Latin America are so much to the fore just now, and since our State Department's policy in the premises is so much what it is, the book has a huge deal of point.

For example, only the other day, according to the news reports, at almost the moment when our noble ally England was concluding a very good commercial treaty with the Argentines, Mr. Roosevelt was menacing them with "sanctions," and Mr. Hull was forbidding our ships to stop at their ports. Obviously, the next step in logical order is to "say it with the Marines" and "civilize 'em with a Krag"—a fine Latin-American policy for this country to be pursuing at this stage of the world's affairs! "Even today," as Mr. Sands says of our earlier adventures in plug-ugly diplomacy, "even today it seldom occurs to us that when we offered our 'way of life' to others at the end of a Springfield or a Krag we were doing the very same thing that so outraged our sensibilities when it was attempted by Mussolini in Africa, or by Hitler in Europe, or by the Japanese in Asia." Well, rather! The most striking fact that this book brings out is that the blue-prints and specifications for Japanese imperialist enterprise in this century were drawn up in detail by us. We taught them just what to do and just how to do it. "Every turning in the path of Japanese expansion," says Mr. Sands, "has been marked by an American precedent; to Korea the path was marked *Hawaii*; to Manchuria it was marked *Panama*."

Precisely so. Mr. Sands has something to say about various persons in the government to whom he was responsible during his assignments; among others, Taft, Root, P. C. Knox, Roosevelt I, Wilson. He is eminently fair with all of them, even generous as far as their intentions are concerned, but naturally none of them gets off too well. The book would be an important one at any time; and now, when our official policy towards Latin America is a matter of such urgent consequence, it is indispensable.

III

BEFORE taking up Mr. Flynn's *Meet Your Congress* it is necessary to understand that the people who revile and belittle our Congress fall into two groups, distinct and separate. This is not generally understood, and it is important.

The first are those who object to the personnel and actions of *the existing Congress*. The trouble with these brethren is that there isn't half enough of them and they aren't one-tenth energetic enough. This country will never have anything like a decent government unless and until every

jobholder is reduced as close as no-matter to the actuarial status of a Russian landlord. "When a feller is a landlord *im Russland*, understand me," Mr. Polatkin said to his partner, Mr. Scheikowitz, "the least he could expect is that he gets killed once in a while." This salutary state of mind should go not only for Congressmen, but for every civil servant from President to postman; it is the only thing that will make them behave themselves, and such is their nature that the mere understanding of the situation would be enough, and there would be no need to proceed to extremities. Suppose every Congressman were certain—sure that all over the country thousands of tar-pots were kept simmering throughout the session and thousands of old feather beds kept handy, do you think he would vote for handing out blank checks to any Executive or accept any "must" bills hailing from the White House? Would any Executive suggest anything of the kind? Not in a thousand years.

The second group of objectors and vilifiers are down on Congress *as an institution*. They are a horse of another color entirely. In their case the trouble is that there are much too many of them and they are much too energetic; especially too energetic about worming themselves into key positions in our government. They are collectivists of one kind or another, and they are against Congress because it is a representative body with power to make kindling-wood of the alien civil systems with which they wish to supplant ours.

So whenever you hear some one reviling our Congress, find out which of these two groups he is in. If the first, applaud him; tell him he doesn't go half far enough. If the second, tell him that our institutions suit us pretty well, that his civil system seems to be going strong in various parts of Europe, and he had better hustle back over there and enjoy himself with his own kind.

But when we who are in the first group are putting our whole grateful souls into the duty of lambasting Congress we should do it intelligently; and here is where Mr. Flynn's work comes in. We should be sure we are right before we go ahead, or we may make fools of ourselves. I say this with pain and mortification because I thought I knew quite a bit about Congress, and I was amazed to find from Mr. Flynn's book not only how much I didn't know, but also how much I did know that isn't so. After this, when I make any reflections on Congress I shall have *this book* by me, and I advise my readers to do likewise.

Mr. Flynn tells us what Congress is; how and why it came to be that way; what it does, and how; what it doesn't do, and why; what its powers are; what it costs; what its methods of pro-

cedure are, and why; what its relations with the Executive and the Judiciary are; what its various committees are, what they do, and why. In short, he gives all the information there is on every aspect of the legislative branch of our government.

He deserves the highest praise for the structure and style of his work. His language is of the simplest, his narrative straightforward, never meandering or out of balance; and perhaps most gratifying of all—gratifying because so infrequently met with—his disinterestedness is complete. He composes with his eye steadily on the object, never letting it wander for an instant. With all this to its credit, how could any book fail to be interesting?—and this book is more than that, it is a fascinating study of a great subject.

I suggest that the reader be a good sport and have some fun with himself, better than he can get out of any cross-word puzzle. At the end of this book is a quiz on each chapter, school-text fashion. Let the reader turn to that, see how many questions on the first chapter he can answer; then turn back and read the first chapter; do the

same with the second and with each succeeding chapter; then finally go back and read the book straight through. I am ashamed to say I came out with a batting average of only 116, which is a disgrace; but it will be higher next season or I shall get out of big-league company and go back to the bushers. Are you with me?

The Road To Foreign Policy. By Hugh Gibson. Doubleday, Doran & Co., New York. 252 pp. \$2.50.

Manifest Destiny. By Albert Weinberg. Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore. 559 pp. \$4.50.

Omnipotent Government. By Ludwig von Mises. Yale University Press, New Haven. 291 pp. \$3.75.

Our Jungle Diplomacy. By William Franklin Sands and Joseph M. Lalley. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill. 250 pp. \$2.50.

Meet Your Congress. By John T. Flynn. Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., Garden City, New York. 157 pp. \$2.00.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, *Editor*

Vol. II, No. 4

December, 1944

IT is interesting that so many of the books which have really stirred things up and set the river afire have been small books.

In 1776 it was Paine's *Common Sense*, no more than a good-sized pamphlet, that touched off the Revolutionary War. In 1847 the *Communist Manifesto* blew up the powder-magazine and cracked Europe wide open. The Four Gospels come to a hundred octavo pages in a well-printed edition, and that book has had a very hefty influence on human thought and action during the last 2000 years.

Mr. Garett Garrett has just now published *The Revolution Was*, a book of fifty pages, large type, large margins, running only to some six or seven thousand words, or about as long as the average story in our weekly magazines. If this book got its just due (which it will not) it would change the whole course of American thought. I say this advisedly, in full knowledge that most people would call it a reckless overstatement. The reason why they would call it an overstatement is simple enough; it is that most people don't believe in the paramount necessity of *right thinking*, and I do. As one who believes that you have to have right thinking on any subject before you can ever have right action on it, I say that Mr. Garrett's book is of the very highest importance.

Mr. Garrett deals with one subject only. The subject is not a matter of theory, but a matter of hard fact. The book shows that all our thought on this subject is wrong from the ground up; shows why it is wrong; and shows, not what the consequences of our wrong thinking may be or will be, but what they actually *have been* and *are*.

Mr. Garrett's subject is Revolution. We think of a revolution in the United States, when we think of it at all, as a grim possibility lying ahead of us. There could be no worse error than this. The revolution is a fact lying behind us. We have

had it. It is over with, done, complete, finished; and the people who planned it, organized it, carried it through to perfect success, now have four clear years in which to consolidate their gains (which they can easily do in six months), suppress all opposition, stifle all complaint, and pick up all the loose odds and ends of power which they have not already gathered in.

This now comes as a big surprise to us only because of our wrong thinking, ignorant thinking, about the word Revolution. We simply don't know what the word means. Isn't it so that when we use that word we are thinking of a popular revolt, armed uprisings, violence, bloodshed, bombs, clashings of mobs with the police and military, perhaps collisions of armies? All wrong, hopelessly wrong. More or less of that sort of thing often goes with revolutions, but no amount of it necessarily means a revolution. You can have a revolution of the first magnitude without any of it; and exactly this is what we have gone through in the last twelve years.

Is this a new idea, this idea that you can have a most tremendous revolution with no bloodshed? I believe it is brand-new to all but a very few of us. Yet it is not new, by any means. More than a century ago the Duke of Wellington was speaking about "a revolution by due course of law," which is precisely what we have had. Except for soldiering, the Iron Duke was not an overly smart man; in fact, one would say he was rather on the dumb side; but he knew what a revolution is, and we don't. Hence he would have been likely to know a revolution if he saw one, which we did not and still do not.

What, then, is a revolution? It is a *shift of power*. Nothing but that. You can have all the rioting and bloodshed in the world, but if it does not bring about a *shift of power* it is no revolution. The shift may be from one people to another, like

the revolution of 1776; or from one class or group to another in the same people, like 1789 and the industrial revolutions in various countries, or like 1860 here. But however the shift may go, and whether accomplished peaceably or with violence, the shift of power *is* the revolution.

The shift that has taken place here in the last twelve years has not been from one people or class to another, but from the people to the State. Social power,—that is, the free power exercised by individuals working in a system of voluntary co-operation,—has been steadily confiscated and converted into coercive State power administered by the Executive in a system of enforced co-operation. This prodigious shift of power has been effected peaceably and “by due course of law,” as the Iron Duke said. Furthermore, the wholesale conversion of social power into State power has been three times formally validated by the people themselves.

This fact puts us completely in the pattern of European experience. Not enough attention has been paid to the evident truth that none of the European “dictators,” as we are fond of calling them, has seized power, any more than our own Executive has done. The people wanted them. It is worth remembering that even after the *coup d'État* of 1851, which was a shocking political blunder, Louis-Napoléon's régime continued to get thundering big popular majorities right up to its final overthrow at Sedan in 1870. The people wanted him.

So, as Mr. Garrett clearly perceives, the revolutionary régime in Washington did not accomplish the shift of power by seizure but by surrender. The people wanted it. Their reasons for wanting it may not in all cases seem sensible or praiseworthy or even decent, but you can't go behind the returns, or what becomes of the republican principle? If the American people prefer an individual slave-status in a system of State-enforced co-operation, as they have three times formally signified that they do, they are within their rights and ought to have it. We who disagree about the merit of their choice are not called upon to expostulate with them or find fault, still less quarrel with them, for the mere passage of time will determine the issue definitely, and nothing else can. The future may let in a good deal of light upon them, and perhaps it may let in some light upon us also.

Mr. Garrett is admirably faithful to the republican principle. He does no preaching, no forecasting. His work is simply a guide to clear and correct thinking on the one subject of revolution; and with our minds as muddled and addled on that subject as they are, no guide is more needed. After showing what revolution means and how

to recognize one when you see it, he discusses each of the nine successive steps by which this revolution was successfully brought off. He then gives a word to the immediate consequences which have followed from it, and that is all. He does not give the slightest hint of anything that may be, can be, or ought to be, done about it. His book is strictly a book of historical fact and record; and because of this, because he suggests nothing for the future, outlines no plan of action, has no “practical” advice to offer, Mr. Garrett's work runs the risk of being quite generally discounted as “too pessimistic.” I doubt that my readers will echo this typically provincial-American impeachment, but if they do they may count on my being thoroughly ashamed of them. Is my barometer too pessimistic because it registers the fact that a great storm of rain and sleet has come up, with a wind howling like seventeen devils? I think not, according to what one may see going on outside my window at this moment; and the word pessimistic is exactly as applicable to Mr. Garrett's book as it is to my barometer. Mr. Garrett is not concerned with either optimism or pessimism; they are entirely off his beat. He is concerned only with the registration of an existing fact; and so is my barometer.

II

CASTOR oil is villainously unpleasant; it is also one of the most useful drugs in the pharmacopœia. An able physician once told me that it comes nearest of anything to being “good for what ails you.” He said further that in most cases people do not take a large enough dose. When the average person has a fit of feeling dull, laggy, low in his mind and ready to sell out at thirteen cents on the dollar, this doctor said, if he takes two ounces—four tablespoonfuls—and then takes another hooker forty-eight hours later, he will come up gay as a lark and ready to face the world like a giant refreshed.

I was somehow reminded of this when I was reading Mr. Carey McWilliams's book called *Prejudice*. It is a horse-doctor's dose of an evil-tasting, evil-smelling substance; castor oil is milk and honey compared with it; but it is a wholesome dose, provided you are a decent self-respecting American. Getting it down will gag you properly, but it will clear your mind as nothing else will about the kind of country you are living in and the kind of people who largely infest it. You will have all the revulsions that two ounces of castor oil would give you. Read fifty pages, and you will feel utterly degraded at the thought of ever setting foot on the West Coast. Read fifty more, and you

are ready to secede from the United States. Finish the book, and you are ready to secede from the human race. But when the dose has settled and has got in its curative work, you will be up on your toes, lively as crickets, full of indignation, and also full of beans.

Mr. McWilliams's book is a history of the way this country has treated one of its minorities, the Oriental Chinese-Japanese minority on the West Coast, and particularly the Japanese minority. What touched him off to write the book was the odoriferous incident of our Federal government's forcibly "relocating" some 70,000 persons of Japanese ancestry immediately after the dust-up at Pearl Harbor. These persons were American citizens, even as you and I. They had citizen's rights of life, liberty and property, as we have. They had committed no crime. There were no charges against any of them, nor any ground of suspicion. Yet the army rounded them up, wrenched them away from their homes and occupations, and herded them into "relocation-areas," which is our government's fancy name for concentration-camps, and is keeping them there under guard.

Hard to get that down without retching, eh, what? I think so. But it is well worth a try. For one thing, it makes you look up the historical record of our doings with minorities,—the loyalists of 1776, the Indians, Mexicans on the border, Italians in Louisiana, Mormons in the Mississippi Valley, Negroes here and there,—and you see that this particular incident on the West Coast is pretty much in the regular pattern. Moreover, with our own record what it is, you feel a little bashful about getting into a great sweat of righteousness over what our European brethren do to their minorities. Isn't it so? Furthermore, if it be competent for our government to segregate and impound one group of law-abiding innocent citizens for no reason whatever, the interesting question is, Why not another group? If a popular clamor should arise, how about it being competent for our army to round up a swarm of innocent Baptists, prohibitionists, Jews, Turks, infidels, heretics, anything you like, and hold them in hock? Yes, decidedly, to clear our thought on this one point alone, Mr. McWilliams's dose is worth taking.

The author regards this unprecedented action of our government against its own citizens as the culmination of a fifty-year guerrilla warfare between California and its detested "Yellow Peril." He gives an excellent resumé of this warfare's progress from the beginning, when it had its rise from the fear of economic undercutting, which is

the root from which persistent civil disturbances of this character always spring. In this instance the fear was not altogether without reason—there is no doubt of that—but its manifestations in violence, its uses as a political springboard and a social scarecrow, have been shameful and despicable beyond expression. There seems to be no doubt that in "relocating" its Japanese, innocent citizens though they were, our jobholders in Washington simply gave way to pressure from a powerful and well-organized body of opinion on the West Coast. Moreover, having gained its point, this body of opinion is now set to prevent the "relocated" citizens from ever returning.

Mr. McWilliams is to be complimented on his attitude and on the temper of his work. In spite of all temptations to exaggerate, to push his advantage, to become overheated, he remains calm, just, judicial, relying solely on the merits of his case to carry conviction to his readers. He is especially convincing when he shows that the trouble is not over, by any means, and that the consequences of our ebullition of racial hatred will be all out of proportion to their exciting cause. The book is well written, and in spite of its subject's revolting character it is highly interesting. I hope my readers will get it, read it with care, and apply their minds to the state of things which it presents.

For when all is said and done, the great question which it must raise in any decent person's mind, the question which must take precedence of all others, is, What kind of people are we, anyway, and what kind of government have we set up for ourselves? Are we actually as fine, as high-grade, idealistic, honorable, noble and all-round decent as we think we are? Just how much of the splendid "American way of life" that we are always talking about do we actually stand for? How well are we actually fixed for our toplofty self-advertised post-war job of giving light and leading to the benighted peoples of the world? If Mr. McWilliams's book causes even a few Americans to put this question to themselves and give it an honest answer, he will not have written in vain.

III

R. D. W. BROGAN, who brought out a book on *The English People* not long ago, has now produced one on *The American Character*. According to the preface, he has done this in order "to make intelligible to the British public certain American principles and attitudes." That is all very well. Mr. Brogan is an Englishman writing for English readers, and he is therefore within his rights in

saying anything about us that he sees fit to say. This being so, however, an American is bound to wonder why the book should have been republished here. What purpose is served by it? None that I can see except the gratification of a rather inane curiosity to find out what an Englishman thinks we are like. I doubt that anything more serious than this can be alleged, and since the impressions of so many Englishmen have already been publicized here, why should those of another Englishman be added to the list?

In view of its original purpose Mr. Brogan's book is a most excellent work, the best of its kind that I have seen. I speak with caution, for I am not one of "the British public" for which it was intended; but as well as an outsider can judge, I think a British reader would get a better idea of us from this book than from any other, and would certainly get much more detailed information. To an American the idea will seem largely superficial,—there is a great deal more to almost any people than the most gifted outsider can discern,—but the information is sound, valuable and always to the point. Mr. Brogan is an excellent observer, a talented reporter, he writes admirably, and he has spent enough time in this country to make his way around among us fairly well. His attitude towards us is cordial and kindly; his interest in us seems genuine, and his expression of it is quite free from

the "certain condescension" which Lowell remarked in the attitude of foreigners generally.

For Mr. Brogan's sake, however, I wish his American publishers had thought twice about bringing his book out at just this juncture in public affairs, when popular sentiment towards England is cooler than it has been for some time, and perhaps cooler than it may be again. For fifty years Americans have been bred to the notion that every British writer is, consciously or unconsciously, a propagandist; and every unfavorable turn in public affairs quickens that suspicion. I have scented no questionable motive whatever behind Mr. Brogan's book; I do not believe there is one. My point is only that any book on this subject is bound to contain passages which an inflamed imagination can and will misconstrue; and therefore in republishing this book, which is distinctly addressed to British readers, not to American readers, Mr. Brogan's publishers have done him no kindness, but have acted, if I may say so, not at all in the best of good taste.

The Revolution Was. By Garet Garrett. The Caxton Printers, Ltd., Caldwell, Idaho. 51 pp. 50 cents.

Prejudice. By Carey McWilliams. Little, Brown and Co., Boston. 328 pp. \$3.

The American Character. By D. W. Brogan. A. A. Knopf, New York. 168 pp. \$2.50.

A REMINDER

What You May Be Reading

For Americans Only, by S. B. PETTENGILL and P. C. BARTHOLOMEW.

This book costs fifty cents. So does Mr. Garrett's book, reviewed in this issue of the REVIEW OF BOOKS. The two together are the best investment for a dollar that we know of. They play perfectly into each other's hand, and a million dollars would not buy any more wisdom and information than they give you. Address the *Committee for Constitutional Government*, 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, N. Y., for Pettengill's book, and *The Caxton Printers, Ltd.*, Caldwell, Idaho, for Garrett's. Better buy two copies (or more) and give the extra ones away.

Social Planning by Frontier Thinkers, by MATTHEW PAGE ANDREWS. *Richard R. Smith*, 120 East 39th St., New York 16, N. Y. 94 pp. \$1.00.

One of the most amusing books we have seen in many a day, and entirely authentic. It will keep you laughing from beginning to end, and will make you a lot wiser about the kind of people who are directing public opinion in this country.

Meet Your Congress, by JOHN T. FLYNN. *Doubleday, Doran*, Garden City, N. Y. 156 pp. \$2.00.

A first-class study of the United States Congress.

Since the Congress represents the people, we ought to know all about it, but when you read this book you will be surprised at the number of things you don't know. When you feel like opening your mouth about Congress, you will be a lot safer if you post yourself up by this book before you begin to talk.

Our Jungle Diplomacy, by SANDS and LALLEY. *University of North Carolina Press*, Chapel Hill \$2.50.

By far the best of all the recent works we have seen on the subject of American foreign policy and our diplomatic service. The last chapter is simply invaluable for its insight into the course of our relations with Japan.

The Saturday Evening Post has lately been printing some remarkably strong and well-informed editorials. The one headed "Europe Needn't Be Poor Forever," in the issue of Nov. 4, is especially striking. The one on Stalin (Nov. 11) shows that the editors have a pretty clear idea of what your uncle Joseph is up to. The issue of Dec. 2 has two that are superb: "Why Blush For the Bill of Rights?" and "Who Made Our Youngsters Generation-Conscious?" In the midst of a journalism that has long since abdicated its function and reduced itself to bilge, it does one's heart good to see strong common sense showing its head once more.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, *Editor*

Vol. II, No. 5

January, 1945

I HOPE my readers will not forget that the kind of advertising which keeps a really good book alive is mouth-to-ear advertising. This is true especially of books which are listed as "non-fiction." Publishers can afford to advertise non-fiction books that deal with a popular topic of the moment,—a war-book, for instance, or one on peace-plans or the work of the OPA,—books which are hardly more than glorified journalism and have little, if any, permanent value. They can seldom find a non-journalistic book which they can afford to advertise adequately, even though they may know that it has great permanent value.

The reason for this is that the number of readers who would be interested in such a book is relatively small. Its sales would not, at most, make the advertising profitable. The publishers are right and are not to be blamed. The fate of such a book is, and must be, very largely in the hands of its friends. Fortunately, the kind of advertising that goes from mouth to ear is not only a life-saver but it is also the most desirable because it brings the book to the right people. It does not produce the largest volume of sales, but it does place the book where it will do the most good.

I say all this because I should like to think of my readers as a sort of informal junto of press-agents for books that potential readers all over the country,—exactly the right kind of people,—are unlikely to hear of in any other way. I would think I was doing a worth-while job if I knew that when I tell my readers that a certain book is really top-flight in its way they would do two things. First, get the book, read it, and see whether they agree with me. Second, if they do agree, think up the right kind of people they know and pass the word along to them. My readers

need not be afraid I shall overwork them; there are not that many top-flight books.

Let me cite an instance of what I am driving at. Suppose we agree, my readers and I, that Mr. Sands's *Our Jungle Diplomacy* is a top-flight book in its line, as I think it is. This book has had no general advertising; I hardly see how it could have any. I presume that on account of its subject it is measurably well advertised in Washington, but the judgment of Washington's reading public is perhaps not to be taken too seriously. But dotted here and there all over the country are persons who are sincerely interested in the mechanism of foreign policy; not Mr. Roosevelt's or Mr. Hull's or Mr. Anybody's foreign policy, but in American foreign policy. They are interested to know how it is framed, how it is controlled, how it is managed and carried on. These are just the right people to have Mr. Sands's book; but especially since they have learned to nibble at the common run of book-reviewing with pretty long teeth, it will be sheer nigger-luck if ever they hear of it.

Now to meet this situation, my readers are also dotted around all over the country, and they are presumably more or less a picked lot or they would not be taking up with a concern like the National Economic Council. Many of them would be likely to know people of the right sort who would regard Mr. Sands's book as a windfall. They are therefore in a position to give Mr. Sands's work or any other top-flight work the most effective advertising it can have, merely by remembering to drop the suggestion into the right person's waiting ear. Most of us have an instinct to be generous and friendly in these ways, but we often forget to "obey that instinct." The point is, not to forget.

A SECOND instance, this time personal, concerns another book which in my judgment is top-flight, Mauritz Hallgren's *Landscape of Freedom*. It was published three years ago by Howell, Soskin and Co., and up to the middle of last month I had never heard of it, although possibly I might have done so if I had been in these parts when it first appeared. News of it came to me by the mouth-to-ear route; a friend in whom I have confidence mentioned it to me, not pressing me at all, but merely saying that he thought it would be of unusual interest to me. Since then I have read it three times with increasing admiration, and I am now reading it again.

The book is a history of liberty in America. Its story is most fascinating. Mr. Hallgren's grasp of his subject is so complete that he is able to tell this story with remarkable ease and simplicity. Few books are so well organized; it is a splendid example of order and method. The whole story is there with not a word wasted, and when one realizes what a big subject Mr. Hallgren has to deal with one has enormous respect for his ability to present it, one might almost say, in kindergarten terms; that is, in terms which are equally suitable to the most cultivated adult intelligence and to the inquiring mind of a normally bright child in the eighth grade. A person of some literary experience can best understand the difficulties which Mr. Hallgren has surmounted in order to get this excellent result, but any thoughtful reader can make a good guess at them on his way through the book.

Mr. Hallgren has another merit perhaps even more admirable than his merit as a literary architect. His work has the mark of complete objectivity, of complete disinterestedness, throughout. I have re-read his book carefully, as I say, and on the evidence offered I can't show a trace of Mr. Hallgren's own convictions, opinions, likings or dislikings. I do not know whether or not he is a friend of liberty, whether or not he believes in it, or to what extent he would wish to have liberty prevail in human society. The book gives no intimation of what the author thinks of liberty as a natural right, or of his views on the merits or demerits of a libertarian social order.

The pleasure one gets out of reading such a book is therefore heightened by a great sense of relief. On a subject as touchy as liberty,—a subject which engages such strong emotions,—most books are avowedly *ex parte*, and in those which do not go so far as that one can always find some little trace of emotional pressure working either for liberty or against it. Usually they are what

the Germans call tendency-books, written by people who have some sort of ax to grind and who go about it in an insinuating and persuasive way. I could name a good many such books, and so can my readers; especially school-books. Mr. Hallgren's book, on the contrary, is so free from any emotional coloration that the most convinced collectivist and the most convinced libertarian (provided they take it honestly as a historical study and nothing else) can read it with equal satisfaction.

For that is exactly what the book is. In Mr. Hallgren's view, liberty in America is a social phenomenon, and for purposes of study it should be approached in the same way as one would approach any other social phenomenon. Like all social phenomena it has a history, and the first step towards understanding it is to study its history, which is what Mr. Hallgren does, and all he does. The ideal of liberty has always persisted in America; very well, how did it get here? Who brought it, and why, and what were the circumstances? How did it develop? What difficulties did it encounter? What have been the forces opposed to it? What is its status at the present time?

These are the questions to which the book proposes to find answers. The first three chapters cover the colonial period, showing the various pressures put on the spirit of liberty by a theocratic regime, and the ways in which those pressures were met. The next two chapters deal with the ups-and-downs of individual liberty after Church and State were separated. From the time of this separation until now, theocratic invasions of liberty have been limited to moral pressure, except as religionists have combined in occasional groups to influence political action under threat of withholding votes from officials who did not comply with their demands. The remainder of the book carries on the history of civil liberty's various fortunes and misfortunes under the regime of the first ten Amendments to the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights.

Most interesting as a narrative, and most worthy of serious study and reflection, are those parts of the book which bear on the fate of liberty at the hands of the State, especially in times of great public excitement and disorder; as for instance in the war-periods of 1812, 1860, 1917. They are worth any one's reading merely as a refresher, to enable him to estimate the status of liberty in his own times more accurately by comparison with its status in times that are past; by comparison of civil liberty under Mr. Madison's Administration, for instance, with what it was under Wilson's or even under Lincoln's. The book's most amusing passages are those which ex-

hibit the suffocation of liberty under social pressure, especially under the iron hand of Mrs. Grundy. In 1870 Harper's Magazine published a biting editorial written by George William Curtis, which echoed the dictum of certain French observers that there is no such thing as free speech in America; and Mr. Hallgren makes it clear that there never has been. If the right of free expression in word or print is not traversed by the State or the Church it may more often than not be wrecked by some fantastic irruption of "public opinion" which everyone knows to be the most ignorant, stupid and conscienceless destructive agency that human society has at its disposal, and yet is so powerful for evil that everyone thinks twice about stirring it up. In this connexion the accompanying Council Paper written by Mr. Flynn deserves careful re-reading, with especial attention to the third paragraph from its end.

One closes Mr. Hallgren's superb historical study with a great sense of shame that our "sweet land of liberty" of which we sing has learned so little about the liberty it vaunts. It has never learned that liberty to assert a right carries with it the correlative responsibility for respecting, nay, for vindicating and upholding, the equal rights of others. No better has it learned that the assertion of liberty carries the duty of forbearance, of toleration. The first immigrants to America brought the ideal of liberty with them, and one of the first uses they made of their own liberty was to infringe upon the liberty of others whose opinions differed from theirs. From that day to this, persecution for opinion,—religious opinion, political opinion, social opinion,—has never ceased in America. Perhaps other peoples have done no better; I do not say that they have; but I do say that with their immense advantages over all others, advantages which they are forever trumpeting, the American people should have done vastly better.

Since Mr. Hallgren's book is three years old, the question arises: How shall my readers get it? I suppose we can hardly hope that it is still in print and on the market, so we won't discuss that chance. But in the first place, there are the public libraries. We have many of them, mostly well managed. If the book is not there, tell the librarian it should be, for it is an important book and you want it looked up. Then there are the bookshops. People are strangely diffident, not to say helpless, about bookbuying. They seem unaware that the business of a bookshop is to supply books. When they write me, as they sometimes do,—well-written letters, too,—asking how to get a book, even a new book, I feel like asking them where they would go for a pair of shoes if they wanted one. I had such a request the other day

from a man in Los Angeles where there surely must be a bookshop or two in easy reach. Go to a bookshop, put in an order, and say you have no conscientious scruples against a second-hand copy, if need be. If there is a second-hand dealer in your town, cultivate him. If not, the Sunday book-section of the *New York Times* and *Herald-Tribune* carries advertisements of many second-hand shops to which you can write and get prompt attention. I make these statements once for all, so when I recommend a book which is not fresh off the press my readers will kindly remember I am not in the bookselling business and will refrain from asking me how to get it.

III

PORTER SARGENT is one of the nation's most eminent and diligent public servants. Each year for twenty-eight years he has got out a handbook of about 1000 pages, listing and critically describing some 3000 American private schools, cross-referencing and indexing his information about them. He does this in the way of business; by profession he is an educational adviser, both to parents and to schools and colleges. Sargent is a free-speaking individualist of the fine old type, now virtually extinct in this country; he says exactly what he thinks about anything in the wide world, and if you don't like what he says it is just too bad. Hence quite regularly he gets under the skin of our educational institutions, but his handbook is such an invaluable tool of the trade that they pretty well have to hold their noses and buy it.

Sargent always writes a long Introduction to his handbook and then reprints it as a separate volume running to something like 250 pages of close print,—close, but clear and legible. Last year's issue, which came out at the end of the year, is entitled *The Future of Education*. Like G. B. Shaw's Prefaces, these Introductions are not written to meet the interest of any special group, but the general interest which all literate citizens may reasonably be supposed to have. A person who knows nothing and cares nothing about the drama can read the Preface to *The Devil's Disciple* or to *John Bull's Other Island* with as much pleasure and profit as the most confirmed habitué of the theatre. So the person whose interest in education is of the vaguest will find Sargent's Introductions as rewarding as the specialist would find them.

He will be rewarded, in the first place, with a prodigious amount of information, all of it first-hand; and if Aristotle was right in saying that "all men naturally desire knowledge," this is a point of interest. Sargent has his own clipping-bureau in his own office, directly under his eye;

it is mostly staffed by upstanding girls who are smart as steel traps. These go over the incredible number of publications that Sargent takes in, comb out the eligible items and file them according to a system of his own devising. Thus the information which Sargent passes out is always documented straight from the horse's mouth.

Then, second, if the reader be a man of humor he will be rewarded with a lot of amusement. Sargent hates pedantry, obscurantism, humbug, buncombe, officialism and pretentiousness, with an untiring hatred. It is worth the price of admission to watch him put the harpoon in some educational stuffed shirt or some array of pedantic nonsense that has been worked up into a "plan" or "system" or "movement." There is enough of this in his Introductions to give them a fine lively punch which no appreciative spirit can afford to miss.

In *The Future of Education* Sargent is dreadfully het up with fear lest the old line of classical studies may come back. "The grand old fortifying classical curriculum" is his pet bugaboo, and he goes to extremes against it which show that sometimes he doesn't quite know what he is talking about. He pretty regularly cuffs my ears, for instance, although I have published plenty to show he is fundamentally right. I agree that "liberal education" is a wicked waste of time except for those who have got what it takes, and these are scarcer than hen's teeth. Moreover, I agree that such persons are utterly useless in our society; they have no function that they are fitted to perform. All of us who have any sense admit this freely, so what more could Sargent ask?

He detests "economic royalism" as all right-minded persons should, and he got up a terrific scunner on Plato as soon as he read somewhere that Plato wrote with intent to prop up the *status quo*. But no classicist worth his salt would go to Plato for instruction in economics or for practical ideas about a civil system. I gave Sargent Joubert's beautiful and exact description of what we

do go to Plato for, and what we get; but I doubt he ever even read it. Faraday was a great natural philosopher; he was also one of the obscure sect of primitivist Christianity called Glasites or Sandemanians. Sir William Huggins was a great astronomer, Sir Oliver Lodge a great physicist. We go to these three men for physics and astronomy, not for their religious convictions or their beliefs about spiritism. Precisely so we go to Plato for what no one else can give in such abundance; not at all for what isn't worth having.

Sargent is such a wonderful fellow that I like to show him off at his amusing worst; he is as full of the most delightful cussedness as a cucumber is of seeds. I have been his admiring friend for many years, and although he may have written me off as hopelessly "anachronistic," I think he rather likes me. In fact, my personal sentiments are so strongly engaged towards Sargent that I have not been sure I could speak of his work with the reserve that is proper to a reviewer. Here, however, is what I suggest my readers should do. Sargent is his own publisher and distributor, thus taking no chances on having things the way he wants them. Send him a couple of three-cent stamps (11 Beacon St., Boston) and ask for descriptive circulars. These will show you what any number of men bigger than I am are saying about his books. Then take a gamble of \$1.50 on *The Future of Education* and read it carefully. Then finally, when you have an hour to spare, go to the public library and glance through his two big books, *War and Education*, and *Getting U. S. Into War*; if they are not there, raise Cain with the librarian until they come. When you see the kind of thing they are I believe you will say they are just what you want to own.

Landscape of Freedom. By Mauritz Hallgren. Howell, Soskin and Co., New York. 444 pp. \$3.50.

The Future of Education. By Porter Sargent. Porter Sargent, Boston. 254 pp. \$1.50.

A REMINDER—What You May Want to Be Reading

With things in the Pacific going as they seem to be, it is a good time to freshen up on Harry Paxton Howard's first-class work on *America's Role in Asia*, which this Review has already recommended as the best available account of this country's actual doings and intentions in the Far East. With that, it would be well to re-read *Men in Motion*, by Henry J. Taylor, largely a war-story, but valuable for a great deal of incidental information about affairs in Africa and the Near East.

Then while your mind is on the Orient, and especially if you think our war there is drawing to a close, as it may be,—you never can tell,—get out Lin Yu-Tang's *Between Tears and Laughter*. All America should read that book line by line and word by word once every six months until peace is declared, and then once every three

months during the year following. Readers will do well to turn first to the two-page Epilogue at the end of the book, get it by heart, then go back to the beginning of the book and read through.

When your mind comes back to consider domestic affairs, the two most important books for you to be re-reading at just this moment,—especially if you are in a position to stiffen any Senator's or Congressman's shaky backbone,—are Garet Garrett's *The Revolution Was* and Lawrence Sullivan's *Bureaucracy Runs Amuck*. Mr. Garrett shows what has happened here in the last twelve years, shows why and how it happened. Mr. Sullivan shows the one particular set of consequences that hit the individual citizen hardest at every tack and turn of his daily life.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, Editor

Vol. II, No. 7

March, 1945

MY readers are in great luck this month, with Professor Joad's book on *The Young Soldier in Search of the Better World*. The Four Years War and the Depression left satire,—what there was of it,—almost entirely to the cartoonists and columnists. Some English writing, not much (and oddly, most of it was in detective-stories), took an occasional fling at satire, and one work of real weight and power was produced, the *Brave New World* of Aldous Huxley. Up to now, the present war has produced nothing of the kind in America, as far as I know, except Mr. Andrews's scathing compilation, *Social Planning by Frontier Thinkers*, which I have repeatedly urged my readers to buy.

In England, Professor Joad has been nobly "redeeming the time" with his work on the Young Soldier. His criticism is as penetrating as Voltaire's and as corrosive as Swift's; and its *temper* marks it as criticism of the very first order. It does not show a trace of bitterness, indignation or impatience, but maintains throughout an easy, effortless, humorous superiority to its subject. In the field of social criticism this mark of invincible superiority is what forever sets off a Rabelais from a Juvenal, a Cervantes from a Swift, and in perhaps a more familiar instance, it is what sets off an Artemus Ward or a Mr. Dooley from a Mark Twain. Rabelais and Cervantes lived consistently in the spirit of Landor's great line,—

"I strove with none, for none was worthy of my strife,"—and so does Mr. Joad.

The book was written for English readers, and most Americans will need a key to some of its characters. The publishers supply one, but they stupidly print it on the inside of the dust-jacket where it is easily missed or lost, instead of in the

book. Here is the story: The Young Soldier, being of an inquiring turn of mind and having heard a great deal about a better world to come after the war, thinks he will look into the matter and find out the particulars of it. He wants to know just what the Better World will be like and just how we are going to get it; so he sets out among the various people who are busily planning the Better World and questions them about it.

First, he falls in with the captain of his company who cites a number of discouraging parallels with the preceding war, dismisses the subject with a loud laugh, reveals himself as the devil in disguise, and vanishes. Then in succession he meets Mr. Speakeasy, member of Parliament; the diplomatist, Mr. Escapegoat; the Rev. Mr. Hate-man, a clergyman of the Established Church; Mr. Transportouse (Transport House is the headquarters of England's conservative labor-leaders) and his two puppets Mr. Ema (Education for the Masses) and Miss Ame, the prospective Ministress of Amenities in the government of the Better World to come.

After all these have had their say the Young Soldier is rather low in his mind and feels doubtful; but he keeps on. Presently he encounters the Marxist Red Robot and the Red-tape Worm, a bureaucrat who will probably be the Minister of Mind-control in the forthcoming Cabinet; next a various assortment of religionists, astrologers, Christian Scientists, theosophists, spiritualists. Next he meets Mr. Heardhux (a composite of Gerald Heard and Aldous Huxley) who expounds a sort of pseudo-mystical doctrine which he finds impracticable and woozy. Then finally, having made the rounds of the forces which are engaged in re-shaping society, and being unprepared to take much stock in any of them, he meets

the Philosopher who treats him to a grown person's dose of common sense.

The upshot of the book is the upshot of Voltaire's *Candide*. It is a good deal more than a fair bet that there isn't going to be any Better World. There may be, but we don't know. Nobody knows. The one thing we do know is that none of those who are "planning" a better world will produce one. Neither will any combination of them, nor all of them put together. The book makes that point perfectly clear. It shows not only that they won't produce one, but also why they can't produce one; and we are now beginning to see that the book is backed up in this conclusion by the hard logic of fact. Professor Joad picked precisely the right moment for publication. He has caught the tide exactly on the turn. Six months ago we were still more or less under the spell of the world-planners, but now the logic of fact has begun to assert itself as it always does in its own good time. The course of public affairs is making it plain to everyone that the preachments of the world-planners are balderdash and their pretensions are mere impudent quackery.

So Mr. Joad arrives at *Candide's* sensible notion that the only way to make a better world is by each individual doing the best he can with himself,—with his mind, his body and his soul. If he does that he will have his hands full enough to keep him busy without wasting any time on futilities about the state of the world. Perhaps this is not such an attractive job as thinking up grandiose schemes for improving other people or "improving society" after the manner of Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Wallace, and other energumens of the New Deal, but it gets results with no offset, which their job does not. How little is left of such people when their schemes go bust! The Young Soldier obeyed a sound instinct and followed a good rule, namely: When you hear of a great wholesale scheme for "improving society," take a long look at the kind of people who are promoting it, and then sheer off.

The book leads straight to the sound conclusion that all anybody can do effectively to improve society is to present society with *one improved unit*. It can't be improved at wholesale, not by all the "social legislation" that our eager Perkeridges and Bevkineses could hatch out in a month of Sundays. So don't worry about society. Damn society! If you have a lot of improved people you will automatically get an improved society; otherwise you will never get one. Each individual has to do his own improving because nobody can do it for him or even help him much. The individual's job is to buckle down and improve himself to the very

limit of his abilities, and if he does this he is free to let society look after itself. He has done his stuff and his responsibility is ended.

That is the moral of Mr. Joad's parable and of Voltaire's. Naturally it does not suit the collectivist's mind or gratify his itch for pernicious meddling. I see that some of our brisk little fellow-travelling reviewers are rather sad about Mr. Joad; they praise him with faint damns. This is as it should be. It is probably the surest guarantee that readers who are blessed with a grain or two of common sense will find that his book is pre-eminently the one they have long been waiting for.

II

ANOTHER work that seems to rub our collectivist reviewers' fur the wrong way is Mr. Lin Yu-tang's *Vigil of a Nation*.

In the autumn of 1943 Mr. Lin returned to his native country and travelled there for six months, covering seven of the inland provinces. His object was to see how China was standing up under the strain of seven years war with the Japanese; how it was facing the various problems arising out of its efforts at unification,—military problems, political problems, financial problems, problems of education, and problems of reconciling diverse modes and standards of social life. This book, as the author says, is a simple record of his experiences and impressions as a Chinese who saw the country from the inside. Although it is necessarily "a book about a journey" it is far from being a travel-book in the ordinary sense of a work done by an alien-observer or an alien reporter. At its outset there is a page of quiet irony anent our approved uses of travel and our conception of its value. The delightful conclusion is that "travel *per se* has become ungentlemanly"; there must always be some mysterious business-like reason for it to make it respectable. Then Mr. Lin goes on with an exquisite defense of the fine art of irresponsible travel, and an encomium on the "cultured vagabond," whom he regards as a bygone type. In the course of this he pays his ironical respects to journalism; to the budding journalism of China as well as the established journalism of the West. He commends Mr. Tong's enterprise in starting a school of journalism, but his criticism of all these messes of organized futility is precisely the right one. "If you command a good English style and possess a penetrating mind," he says, "you don't need a course in journalism; and if you don't, the school can't help you." For its wisdom, its humor, its long satisfying stretch of humanity, its reflection of a mature and reasonable attitude towards life, Mr.

Lin's Preface of fourteen pages is invaluable to any reader, regardless of his interest or lack of interest in the subject-matter of the book itself.

It was as a cultivated vagabond, then, that Mr. Lin pilgrimized in China, not a journalist or a statistician. He did not take a single note, and his personal diary does not run to a thousand words. But we Americans are sure to ask impatiently, What is the practical point of a vagabond's story told in terms of "my own perceptions, feelings, and the more memorable excitements of the moment"? What we want is facts, the facts about China. To understand what the Chinese are doing, what they are after, what they hope and plan for, what they expect, we must have factual information; we must have the solid facts translated for us in terms of maps, graphs, mathematical formulas, charts, psychological studies, expositions of "racial characteristics," and such-like. The cultivated vagabond is a wash-out at all this, so therefore what use is his work?

It is hard to say, and I am very diffident about putting myself forward as the right person to discuss the matter. No one has greater respect for solid fact, scientific fact, than I have. Of course we need maps and graphs and charts and all the rest of it. It does seem to me, however, that in dealing with a people there are whole mountain-ranges of solid fact that you just can't translate in terms of maps and graphs. It seems to me also that the cultivated vagabond has a clearer view of these chunks of fact than the statistician has, and a better sense of their importance; also that his pictures communicate this view and sense; and that thereby he contributes full as much towards a competent understanding of the people in question as the statistician does, or the historian or the journalist. If I am all in the air about this, let me make a clean job of it by saying that Dibelius and Mr. Brogan tell me a vast lot that is extremely valuable *about* the English people of today, but I *understand* them much better from reading Angela Thirkell. When I meet an English person I understand far better the kind of thing I am up against from having read Pepys and Creevey and the *Memoirs of William Hickey* than from all the time I have spent on the super-excellent work of professional historians. One *knows* more, much more, from poring over the historians, essayists, statisticians, and no one in his right mind would dream of discounting this knowledge,—it is invaluable, one has to have it,—but practical *understanding*, getting at the innermost what's-what of a people, is quite another matter.

So the cultivated vagabond has his uses. Some-

thing like this seems to have been in Mr. Lin's mind when he produced *The Vigil of a Nation*. He expresses the hope that his "inside pictures, presented fairly, will contribute towards a better insight into the Chinese people and their problems"; and he believes that the understanding thus gained "will be deeper and more intimate than from a volume of economic and political essays"; for, as he says further, "one cannot begin to discuss the problems of a foreign country until one has some pictures of the land and its people." This seems like simple good sense. One wishes that our newspapers and periodicals would govern themselves by it in arranging for their foreign news-coverage and articles on the various phases of foreign affairs.

As far as one reader is concerned Mr. Lin's hope is realized, and I can fully qualify as just the reader he is aiming at; so my experience is likely to be worth something to others who are similarly qualified. One could hardly be more ignorant of China, the Chinese, and Chinese affairs than I am. Even my readings in translation from one or two Chinese philosophers have been pitifully little. When such things were to be had I was an eager amateur in a great variety of food which my Chinese friends assured me was Chinese, and I believed them. Beyond this, nothing at all. I have never met Mr. Lin or seen him. His published writings have won my deepest respect for him as one of the wisest and ablest men now living, and a representative of the soundest of practical philosophies. Mr. Lin finds that Americans know little of the Chinese and understand them less; he has composed this picture-book to help us understand them better. Inasmuch, then, as I do not know or understand them at all, I should say I am as good a guinea-pig as he could find in America.

I am unable to pass judgment on the factual substance of his book, for that would imply that I had either some knowledge of Chinese matters or some opinions about them, and I have neither. All I can say is that the character reflected in Mr. Lin's writings, their invariable tone and temper, has given me complete confidence in the integrity of his judgment. It needs no great shakes of a literary critic to detect the evidence of that integrity on any page of any of his works. As for the rest, his pictures of men and things in the seven provinces he covered produce on me the effect he meant them to produce. The kind of knowledge they impart is the kind that tends always towards understanding; it tends that way both by its substance and by its method of presentation. However much or little more I may

know from having carefully read his book, I feel that I have a great deal better practical understanding; and if that effect is produced on me, there is every reason to suppose it will be produced on others as ignorant as I,—and no doubt there are many such.

Most of the pictures are pleasant; some of them are rather grim. All of them are interesting, and all of them are convincing, provided the reader regards them with a free and unbiased mind. They all bear the mark of authenticity; it is as manifest in their artistry as in their subject-matter. The philosopher-poet is unquestionably the consummate artist in his management of light and shade, of composition and perspective, thus producing a total impression of reality which is beyond the power of the reporter-realist to produce. It is the Tourgueniev, not the Balzac, Zola or Goncourt, who produce an impression of reality in its completeness.

I have certain antipathies and prejudices which Mr. Lin's book has set to stirring uneasily. General Chiang's government proposes to "modernize" China after a Western pattern of unification, nationalism, militarism, industrialization; in a word, to Occidentalize it. Mr. Lin accepts this, favors it, thinks it is necessary, and in my ignorance I have no choice but to agree. Mr. Lin knows, and I do not. When I see what such measures have come to in the Western world, however, the kind of people they produce, the standards of collective life that they have set, my agreement with Mr. Lin is darkened by deep disappointment. I agree as I would agree in a physician's dictum that there is no hope for a dying friend. My mind goes back to Mr. Lin's own statement that China has managed somehow to squeeze along "for 4000 years without police and lawyers, and the soldier is despised." If this happy state of things must end, with all that it implies, it must end; but one may regretfully believe that the world will be much poorer—and much meaner—for its ending.

Again, Mr. Lin thinks this country should invest heavily in the New China, and if I were a

Chinese I would think so too. Being American, I regard China in this instance only as I do all other foreign countries. Why for example, should Americans now be mucking about in the affairs of other peoples all over Europe, Britain and the near East, any of whom would rejoice to cut our throats? Let the heathen rage! Their affairs are not ours, and if they get in a tangle, it is distinctly not our job to straighten them out. Let's be friendly to all countries, China included, playing no favorites. If China has anything we want, let's buy it and pay for it; and if we have anything China wants, let her do the same; and let that be the end of it. This was Mr. Jefferson's doctrine of foreign affairs, and we have never successfully improved on it.

Mr. Lin gives a long circumstantial account of the "civil war" in China, and makes very serious charges against alleged perfidies of the Chinese Communists. Here again I take Mr. Lin's word cheerfully for everything he says; and this for three reasons. First, Mr. Lin's unblemished record of integrity; second, he is a Chinese, hence knows more of native affairs in an hour than all alien reporters put together could learn in a lifetime. Third, I never yet knew a modern political -ist or -ite of any kind who did not habitually lie as fast as a dog can trot. Mr. Lin's object in this recital is to set us straight on what he regards as the extremely unreliable and *ex parte* reports we get concerning General Chiang's government and the activities of Uncle Joe's boys. Knowing as well as I do the collectivist bias that prevails among our commentators, editors, correspondents and article-writers, I think my readers would do well to preserve an open mind on Chinese affairs until they have thoroughly digested Mr. Lin's account of what the Communist brethren are up to.

The Adventures of the Young Soldier in Search of the Better World. By C. E. M. Joad. The Arco Publishing Co., New York. 154 pp. \$2.00.

The Vigil of a Nation. By Lin Yu-tang. The John Day Co., New York. 262 pp. \$2.75.

A REMINDER—What You May Be Reading

Readers might look back as far as that very good book by Professor Carl L. Becker called *How New Will the Better World Be?* (Alfred A. Knopf, N. Y., 246 pp., \$2.50.) It was the first authoritative American book, I believe, to express serious doubt on this interesting subject. It is not so forceful and convincing as Mr. Joad's book, and it was published a good deal ahead of its time, in the days when we were all quite sure that the Better World was just around the corner. Now

that doubt of this has become general, it is worth re-reading.

The Saturday Evening Post of March 17 has a good article on Our Dubious New Empire, describing the nice post-war mess that our doings in the Pacific have brewed. There are two excellent editorials in the same issue, one on the Yalta humbug, and the other on the chance of our Planning Ourselves Into Fascism. They are very thoughtful stuff.

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ALBERT JAY NOCK, Editor

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IN the course of the last twelve months the mail has brought me an increasing number of small tracts and leaflets, which is a hopeful sign as far as it goes. Hardly any of them are describable as pamphlets, strictly speaking. Not nearly enough pamphlets are being produced in this country, and most of those that are produced are not nearly so good as they should be. In our early days we laid the foundation for a very respectable tradition of pamphleteering. John Quincy Adams, signing himself by various Roman names, did well at it. Madison, Hamilton and Jay expounded an unpopular cause in the pamphlets which were put together in a volume called *The Federalist*. But the pamphlet never became a firmly established form of literature in America as it has been in England ever since the latter part of the sixteenth century, and in France since 1550.

There are two reasons for this. First, the absence of real political issues. In order to have first-class pamphleteering you have to have a first-class issue, a real issue, not a humbugging affair of mere words vamped up as a vote-catcher. In 1787 Madison, Hamilton and Jay had a whaling big issue before them, an issue which got right down to the fundamental philosophy of government. Is the United States for all purposes a sovereign nation, or is it a confederation of sovereign units? Or as Mr. Jefferson thought, should it be a half-and-half,—a sovereign nation in its foreign relations while remaining a confederation in its domestic affairs? To deal with all sides of an issue like that you had to have men who knew the fundamentals of their governmental philosophy backwards and forwards, and we had them. The most profound student of government we have

ever yet produced was John Adams; and when the same issue cropped out at a later day it raised up the one man who ran him a close second in profundity, John Caldwell Calhoun.

Continental imperialism was an issue in the 'forties, and overseas imperialism became an issue in 1898. They produced nothing much in the way of pamphleteering. In the forty years succeeding, not even the ghost of a real issue appeared. Our bipartisan political system offered our people nothing but a choice of which gang should plunder them. This being so, even though now the people have been for ten years confronted with an issue of the first magnitude, it is perhaps not unnatural that they should be incurious about it. Considering their political experience, how indeed could they be expected to know a great issue when they see one, and how could a respectable order of pamphleteering be brought forth under such conditions?

The second reason why the pamphlet never took root here is that it was so soon superseded by the newspaper as an organ of personal opinion, personal principle, and personal conviction. Personal journalism persisted long after the Civil War; the country was dotted all over with one-man newspapers. People who loathed the old *Tribune* nevertheless read it because they wanted to know what Horace Greeley had to say. So with Dana's *Sun*, the Springfield *Republican*, New Orleans *Picayune*, Boston *Transcript*, Burlington *Hawkeye*, Providence *Journal*, Detroit *Free Press*, old Marse Henry's *Courier-Journal*, Will White's *Gazette*, and no end of others. But some newspapers became impersonal, and have so far abdicated even their primary function of publishing news as to be now mainly a medium of advertising.

With those journals, the proprietor is a merchant dealing in two commodities, paper and advertising-space, and he will print nothing prejudicial to the taste and fancy of his customers. The kind of news he prints is the kind they want to read, and he prints no opinions that are likely to run counter to theirs.

The rise of the magazine also affected the production of pamphlets, but the magazine soon gave way to the same kind of regime that governed so many newspapers. The undermining of confidence in so many examples of these two agencies, the newspaper and the magazine, has opened a great opportunity for pamphleteering. This has always been the case. In any time of public excitement pamphleteering has flourished wherever the press has been controlled or muzzled. In France at the turn of the century, for instance, from 1894 to 1906, there was a tremendous eruption of pamphlets set going by the Panama Canal scandals and the notorious Dreyfus case, on which "the honor of the French army was at stake." In England also, from 1827 on to the end of the South African War in 1902, a huge and steady stream of pamphlets kept flowing, fed by intense public interest in matters like the Poor Laws of 1828, the Canadian Rebellion of 1837, the Corn Laws of the "Hungry 'Forties," the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny, the Black Sea Question, the Franco-Prussian War, Irish Home Rule. Since 1914 the volume of English pamphleteering has fallen off; but in one of my reviews last year I called attention to the series of notable pamphlets published by the English Society of Individualists.

II

DURING the present war a small amount of literature in this general order has been produced here and as I said, its volume seems slightly on the increase. I say "this general order" because not much of it is in what we understand by a strictly pamphlet form; some of it is in the form of broadsheets, some in leaflets, some in booklets, and some are of the news-letter type. I shall pick a few out of my accumulation and use them as a basis of critical comment to bring out certain points which I should like to make for my readers' benefit.

I shall pass over the publications of the National Economic Council for my readers, of course, see them all and are familiar with their quality.

Some of our most energetic publishing is being done on the West Coast. The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce has got out a great deal of

excellent useful matter in leaflets and small treatises bearing on various public questions. They are all good, all sound, all to be recommended as suiting their purpose, but as a matter of strict definition they are not by any means up to the mark of first-class pamphleteering. In fact, they are not pamphlets at all. Many of them—too many—are reprints of speeches and addresses; and not once in a blue moon do you find a good speech that fills the bill for a pamphlet; the *ad hominem* method is not the same for both. You can verify this by listening to a discourse from any great orator on the platform or in the pulpit and then reading a stenographic report of the address next day. Conversely, no top-notch pamphlet can pass muster as a speech. You can verify this by taking one of the great examples of pamphlet-making, say Swift's *Remarks on the Barrier Treaty*, or his *Modest Proposal*, and then imagining Swift spouting it from the rostrum.

The Los Angeles Chamber has published one statistical and analytic document that I strongly urge my readers to send for, at an outlay of half a dollar. It is worth uncountable dollars to any citizen. It is called *The Economic Consequences of Mr. Keynes*, a biting title, and it consists of an examination of the iniquitous Bretton Woods Agreement, by an extremely able statistician, Dr. V. O. Watts. In connection with this work Mr. Crowther's little four-page leaflet is indispensable; it can be got from the National Economic Council. Read this leaflet carefully two or three times, and then turn to Dr. Watts for a thorough elucidation of the subject.

The executive head of the Chamber, Mr. Read, has published (through the Register Publishing Co., Santa Ana, Calif.) a small brochure called *Pattern for Revolt*, costing twenty-five cents. By reason of its design and plan it can not very well be called a pamphlet, and I am bound to say that the author undertook to follow a rather unmanageable method; or if that be too strong a term, difficult method, one that keeps getting in his way and has to be watched. He cast his work in the form of a string of imaginary political speeches, and imaginary speeches are as unsuited to the purposes of pamphleteering as actual speeches are, unless they are in the vein of pure satire. Something effective has occasionally been done in this vein and might be done again if one had the gift for it. We all remember *The Man Who Knew Coolidge*, the work of Mr. Sinclair Lewis, a born pamphleteer if ever there was one, but who never knew what his true talent was and therefore

never cultivated it; he could have been the *Courier* or *Cormenin* of the period 1932-42 and the *Desmoulins* of the present time. But Mr. Read's imaginary speeches are the farthest removed from satire; they are matter-of-fact to the core.

Nevertheless, for three reasons I ardently wish Mr. Read's work could find its way into the hands and mind and memory of every American. The first reason is that Mr. Read knows what political issue is now before us, and very few of us know that, very few indeed. Remember how few there were at the time of the Civil War who knew what the issue was; most people thought it was the status of the Negro. So today most of us think the real issue is peace-terms, free enterprise, social security, always something which it is not. The issue is whether the people are servants of the State or the State a servant of the people. Dr. Goebbels put that issue squarely before us when he said that the Germans would win, no matter how the battles went, because we would have to adopt their political philosophy *in toto* and permanently, in order to beat them. Our paramount issue is, Was he right or wrong?

Second, Mr. Read sees clearly that if Dr. Goebbels was wrong, our political programme must be one of ruthless retrenchment and repeal; the programme of the British Whigs and early Liberals, who saw that sound reform does not lie in making new laws but in repealing old ones. Of the 18,110 laws passed by the British legislature since 1225 four-fifths were repealed by the end of 1872; and of that number 2,759 were repealed during the three years 1870-71-72. When we have matched that record—and not before—we can respectfully invite Dr. Goebbels to guess again.

Third, it is apparent throughout his work that Mr. Read has some idea of the difference between a nation and an agglomeration, and has some doubt that the old question of our national status was ever actually settled. The Civil War was supposed to have settled it forever, and it did—but only for political and commercial purposes. Mr. Read seems to think with Renan, that "a customs-union is not a fatherland"; that a political entity established over a large free-trade area is not necessarily a nation. I don't wish to commit Mr. Read to anything, but if I asked him whether the United States is for all purposes a nation, I would rather expect him to say, "No. With all due deference to Dr. Goebbels and Mr. Roosevelt, you can do big things with their hog-trough philosophy of collective life, but you can't build a nation on it. A nation exists only where the individual citizen

has the constant proud sense of participation in a common spiritual heritage, and a will to improve that heritage for those to whom he will pass it on. You can't get that out of a hog-trough."

III

BEFORE leaving the Coast I wish to recommend Rose Wilder Lane's booklet called *Give Me Liberty* (Pamphleteers, Inc., 1151 South Broadway, Los Angeles 15, fifty cents). It is the record of personal experience on the fringe of collectivism and in the larger liberties of our American economy. It is written in a breathless earnestness which rather buffets the reader about, but on the whole it is unusually interesting and very good.

In the East a first-class statistical booklet called *National Thrift and the Public Debt* has been put out by Dun and Bradstreet. The author is Mr. Roy A. Foulke. The price is not stated, but I presume fifty cents would cover it. As an exhibit of impending hopeless insolvency,—and for all I can make out, actual present insolvency,—it impresses me as rather terrifying. I speak of it as a matter of special concern to businessmen, both large and small; but it is of concern also to any one interested in knowing where we stand financially and what we may expect.

Out of Washington comes a double-barrelled weekly publication called *Human Events* (1702 K St., N. W., Washington 6. \$10 a year). It consists of a two-page news-letter accompanied by a four-page disquisition on some aspect of public affairs. The news-letter, by Mr. Frank Hanighen, is a model of its kind; nothing could be better; the four-page feature varies considerably in interest, aptness and force. Occasionally it presents something that one can't afford to miss, but from week to week one sees how it could be much improved,—notably, for example, if it were always done by the same hand.

Speaking of that, the power and leverage gained by this method of one-man production was never better shown than by ex-Congressman Samuel B. Pettengill's weekly letter (205 East 42d St., New York, \$10 a year). I spoke some time ago about his superb book *For Americans Only*, and if my readers have not yet got it I want them to put on full steam after it without delay. There is never any discount on old Sam, as his admiring friends call him. He always knows what he thinks and why he thinks it, always has the straight facts and figures to back him up, and always forks it out

good and hot from the griddle. Old Sam is doing a land-office business with his weekly letter, and whole-souled Americans throughout the country are praying daily that he will live a thousand years.

To my way of thinking, by far the best contribution to our minor literature of public affairs is a monthly four-page broadsheet, uncommonly well printed, called *Analysis* (150 Nassau St., New York 7, \$1 a year). This is also a one-man affair, put out by Mr. Frank Chodorov. My observations on this production are not so much to show why I think so well of it as to throw light on the general subject of pamphlets and pamphleteering.

First, then, Mr. Chodorov knows he must produce something that is not only worth reading but is also readable; and this does not mean following Arthur Brisbane's prescription of three-line paragraphs and chopped-up sentences. That is a device invented for people who can't write and are addressing people who can't read. Mr. Chodorov knows that producing readable matter means infernally hard work; I can tell that by what he produces,—it looks so deceptively easy. My first suggestion to the aspiring pamphleteer would be that he study a few first-class models and take to heart Sheridan's observation that easy writing usually makes dam' hard reading.

Second, Mr. Chodorov has a social philosophy that is fundamental, and his command of it is so complete that he can express his critical view of a large subject in the fewest and simplest terms. In his last issue, for example, he wrote one page on The Unimportance of Yalta and another on Mr. Wallace's Competence. He took these subjects entirely away from the conventional line of approach, applied a new and competent measure to them in the simplest kind of language, and when he ended there was nothing left for any one to say; he had said it all. Moral again for the intending

pamphleteer: If you haven't a fundamental philosophy, or if you have one and haven't enough command of it to see at once where and how it is applicable, then either hustle around and get one or else don't try to write pamphlets.

Finally, Mr. Chodorov has the kind of humor that keeps him always superior to his subject. If the aspiring pamphleteer hasn't that he had better sweat blood to cultivate it. Much of our controversial and hortatory literature is sound and good enough; but dear Lord, how dull, dogged, dreary it is, and how dismally it plods along on the dead-level of platitude! How is it that the people who are most eagerly hell-bent on saving the country must be so regularly devoid of this type of humor? One could expect it in the nostrum-peddler or the person with an ax of his own to grind surreptitiously, but why should this quality be lacking in one who is disinterestedly out for the public good? I have wondered at this for years, but could make nothing of it.

IV

THE point of my writing is that no time has ever been more favorable to pamphleteering than the present; that little of any account is being done with it; and that no really distinguished pamphleteers have made their appearance. The pamphlet is a distinct form of literature. From what I have said perhaps may be gathered some notion of the kind of thing it is, of the need for it, and of the way to set about producing it. The reader will notice that I have written somewhat on the principle of *lucus a non lucendo*. To show what a pamphlet ought to be, I have written about booklets, leaflets, broadsheets, letters, and have not mentioned a single pamphlet. I did it that way to give the reader's scientific imagination a little good exercise.